



JOHANNES SCOTT  
S. T. P.

Printed for S. Mansfield at the Ship near the Royal Exchange.



JOHANNES SCOTT  
S. T. P.

Printed for S. Mansfield at the Ship near the Royal Exchange.

PRACTICAL  
DISCOURSES  
Upon several  
Subjects.

---

Vol. I.

---

By JOHN SCOTT. D. D.  
late Rector of St. Giles's in the  
Fields.

---

L O N D O N:

Printed for Walter Kettily at the Bishop's  
Head in St. Paul's Church-yard; and  
Samuel Manship at the Ship near the Roy-  
al Exchange in Cornhil. 1700.

Class. No. 844494 Cut. 311 # 337 F13 1933 5/- (240.)

To the Honourable  
WILLIAM MOUNTAGUE, Esq;

**T**HE following Discourses do breath the Spirit of the Author, (who being dead yet speaketh.) For they Carry in them a very sensible Concern for the honor of God, and for that (in which that honor has chiefly displayed it self to us,) the good of Mankind. For it will be no hard Matter for a considering Reader to be Convinced, that Misery (whether here, or hereafter) is the fatal Consequence of wickedness; and that to make our selves happy

---

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

---

happy we must make our selves Good. And therefore it is hoped, that the seasonable publication of them may by God's blessing, and by the sweet and forcible insinuations of that Candor, Zeal, and Reason, with which they are inculcated, at least assist a vicious Age to Recollect it self; and may so far do so, as to be a means to reclaim some of those who have blotted it with that Character. And this hope is so much the greater, because, as we may rationally expect God's blessing upon our good Endeavours; so we may the more firmly do so, when such our Endeavours are warm and hearty. The Good and

---

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

---

and Merciful God accompany the design of the Author with his Grace ; and extend that Grace to the utmost extent of the publication ; and by making both effectual turn our hopes into proprie-  
tie.

Sir, The Relations of the deceased Author having observed your great respect and kindness to him, and your diligent attendance upon his Ministry, hope the Dedication of these excellent Reliques of his will be acceptable to you, as they are like to be of singular use, profit and advantage to all pious and good Christians.

The

## The C O N T E N T S.

**A** Discourse concerning Bodily Exercise in Religion, upon 1 Tim. 4. 6. Page 1.

**A** Discourse of the Necessity of a Publick National Repentance; upon Ezek. 18. 30. P. 77.

**A** Discourse concerning the meet Fruits of Repentance, and the necessity of bringing forth such Fruits, upon Matth. 3. 8. P. 140.

**A** Discourse concerning a Death-bed Repentance; upon Matth. 25. 10. P. 189.

**A** Discourse concerning the great Evil of deferring Repentance; upon Rev. 2. 21. P. 230.

**A** Discourse of Submission to the Will of God; upon Luke 22. 42. P. 268.

**A** Discourse concerning Self-denial; upon Matth. 16. 24. P. 305.

**A** Resolution of that grand Case, How a Man may know whether he be in a state of Grace and Favour with God; upon 1 John 3. 7. P. 357.

**A** Discourse concerning the Nature of Wilful Sins, shewing how inconsistant they are with a good State, or our being born of God; upon 1 John 3. 9. P. 384.

**A** Discourse of the Excellency of the Christian Religion to procure Peace and Satisfaction of Mind; upon John 14. 27. P. 415.

**A** Discourse shewing that when Mens Minds are divided between God and their Lusts, they must lead very anxious and unstable Lives; upon James 1. 8. P. 454.

1 T I M,

## 1 TIMOTHY IV. 6.

*Bodily exercise profiteth little ; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

**T**HE great Design of *Christianity* being to promote our *future Happiness*, and qualify us for it ; Things are more or less valuable in its esteem, as they more or less conduce to this great and excellent End. And hence the Apostle tells us, that of all the Virtues *Christianity* obliges us to, *Charity* is the greatest, 1 Cor. xiii. 13. that is, a sincere Love of *God*, and an universal good Will to *Men* ; and the greatest it is upon this account, because of all Virtues it is most *congenial* to the *Heavenly State*, that being a State of *endless Love*, and *pure Friendship* ; and all other Virtues are valued more or less proportionably, as they partake of this Virtue of *Charity*. To give *Worth* to our *Faith*, it is necessary it should *work by Love*, Galat. v. 6. To make our *Knowledge* acceptable, it is necessary it should run into *Love*, 1 Cor. viii. 2, 3. yea without *Charity* the *Gift of Miracles*, *Alms-giving*

giving, and *Martyrdom* it self are Things of *no value* in the accounts of *Christianity*, *1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3.* Nay so much is this great Virtue designed by the Christian Religion, that the Apostle tells us that the *end of the Commandment is Charity*, *1 Tim. i. 5.* that is, all the *Duties* which the Commandment enjoyns are designed only as *Means* to advance and perfect our Love to God and Men: And all *Means*, you know, are more or less excellent proportionably, as they conduce to the *Ends* they are designed for. Wherefore since our *future Happiness* is the ultimate *End* of Christianity, and universal *Love* our most necessary *Qualifications* for it, it necessarily follows that the *Goodness* of all Religious *Means* consists in their *Aptitude* to *abstract* and *purify* our *Affections*; to *exalt* and *sublimate* our *Love*, and to *propagate* in us that godlike and heavenly *Temper*, which is so necessary to *qualify* us for the *Enjoyment* of God and Heaven. But alas! how ordinary is it for Men to mistake their *Means* for their *Ends*, and to value themselves upon doing those Things, which if they be not directed to a farther *End*, are altogether insignificant; accounting those Things to be *absolutely* good, which are but *relatively* so, and which, unless they conduce to that which is good, are perfectly *indifferent*.

ferent. Of which we have too many sad Instances among our selves; for how many are there, who though they have *nothing* else to prize themselves for, but only of their keeping of *Fasts* and looking sourly on a Sunday, their hearing so many *Sermons*, and numbering so many *Prayers*; are yet bloated with as high *Conceits* of their own *Sanctity* and *Godliness*, as if they had commenced *Saints*, and were arrived to the highest degrees of *Perfection*. And tho' *Pride* and *Malice*, *Covetousness* and *Ambition*, are the only *Graces* they are eminent in, yet shall you see these empty wretched Things perched upon the *Pinacle* of *Self-Conceit*, and from thence looking down upon poor *moral* *Mortals* as if they were Things of an *inferior Species*, not worthy to be reckoned in the same *Class* of Beings with themselves. Such flaunting *Hypocrites*, it seems, there have always been, and in these later Times it is foretold they should abound; for so the Apostle tells us 1 Tim. iv. 1: that the *Spirit* speaketh expressly, that in the later *Age*s there should arise a sort of People who departing from the *Faith*, should give heed to seducing *spirits* and *doctrines of devils*; who should forbid *Marriage*, and command *Abstinence from Meats*, vers. 3. that is, as I suppose, should place all their *Religion* in *outward* and *bodily* *Severities*,

which at best are only *Means* and *Instruments* of Religion; and that in these they should pride themselves, as if they were the only *Saints* of the Age: whereras, in truth, they would prove the rankest *Hypocrites* that ever appeared in a religious Vizard. And of these he exhorts *Timothy* carefully to *forewarn* his *Flock*, and for his own part to *reject* their profane and ridiculous Fables; and rather to exercise himself in true *substantial* Godliness, than in such *outward* *bodily* Rigors and Severities; for which he subjoyns this general Reason, *for bodily exercise profiteth little*, that is, *mere outward* *bodily* Exercise in Religion abstracted from *inward* Piety and Godliness, is of very little avail in a Religious Account: For the *bodily* Exercise here spoken of, it seems, was such as had some *little* Profit attending it, and consequently was such as had some *general* Tendency to Good, and was improvable to *some* advantage, had it been *wisely* managed and directed. For *περὶ δὲ τὸν*, here translated *little*, is not so to be understood, as if it signified *nothing*; because it is here opposed to something that is greater, *viz.* to *περὶ τὰ ταῦτα*: *Bodily Exercise profiteth little, but Godliness is profitable for all things*; and therefore this *bodily* *Exercise* must profit *something*, though less than *Godliness*, which is profitable for *all* *things*:

things: As when *Plato* says  $\Sigma\alpha\kappa\epsilon\gamma\tau\alpha$   $\tau$   $\delta\lambda\gamma\tau\alpha$   $\rho\epsilon\sigma\tau\epsilon\alpha\tau$ ,  $\alpha\lambda\lambda\theta\alpha\tau\alpha$   $\delta\lambda\pi\tau\alpha\tau$ , *Socrates* must be a little attended, but *Truth* a great deal more. And if it be such an Exercise as doth profit a *little*, then it must be such as is *Religion*, and is of some *small* account in Religion. In the Prosecution of this Subject therefore I shall do these two things :

I. Shew you what this *outward* or *bodily* Exercise in Religion is.

II. In what Cases it is that it *profits* little.

I. Wherein doth this *bodily* Exercise consist? I answer, it consists in these six things :

1. In an outward visible *Profession* of Religion.

2. In bodily *Severities* upon Religious Accounts.

3. In bodily *Passions* in Religion.

4. In bodily *Worship*.

5. In bodily *Fluency* and *Volubility* in Religious Exercises.

6. In a mere outward *Form* or *Round* of Religious Duties.

1. It consists in an outward visible *Profession* of Religion. That we should make a visible *Profession* of the true Religion, when it is sufficiently proposed to us, is an unquestionable *Duty*, and that for this

Reason; because not to *profess visibly* what we believe to be the true Religion, is an open *disowning* of God, who is the immediate Object of all true Religion. For he that *believes* that this is the Will of God, and yet is either *ashamed* or *afraid* openly to *avow* and *acknowledge* it, declares that he is either ashamed of God, or that he fears *Man* more than God; both which are highly impious. Besides, by our *visible* owning of Religion, we propose it to *others*, who by our Example may be perswaded to embrace it as well as we; and it is our Duty not only to *entertain* the true Religion our *selves*, but so far as in us lies, to *propagate* it to *others*; that so diffusing our *Light* round about us, others may be *directed* to Heaven by it as well as our selves. This therefore is of *some* Account with God, that we *visibly* profess the true Religion; but if this be *all* we do, it will profit us but very little. For if we do not own Religion in our *Actions*, while we profess it in our *Words*, we contradict our selves; our *Practice* gives the Lye to our *Creed*, and our wicked *Lives* baffle our holy *Profession*: for while a Man acts *contrary* to the Rules of his Religion, he doth as effectually *disown* it, as if he should openly *renounce* his *Baptism*, and make a publick *Recantation* of Christianity. For as our *Profession* of Religion

gion is performed by a *visible* signification of our Belief of it, and as this may be signified by our *Actions* as well as our *Words*; so in effect we do *renounce* Religion when we give any *visible* signification that we do *not* believe it; and this we do as well when we *act* like Infidels, as when by *Words* we declare our Infidelity. For by our *Deeds* we may signify our Minds as well as by our *Words*, and he that *acts* as if he did not believe, doth give a more *convincing* Argument of his Infidelity, than all his *Words* or *Professions* can be of the contrary; because it is rationally supposable that a Man will rather *pretend* to believe what he doth not, than that he will *act* contrary to his own Belief and Judgment; it being a greater degree of *Violence* to our selves to *act* contrary to what we do believe, than to *pretend* to believe what we do not. So that it is not all our *Talk* and *verbal* owning of Religion that will serve the end of a *visible* Profession, which is, so to own God as to induce *others* to own him as well as our *elves*; because he that denies God in his *Actions* will never be able to induce others to believe that he doth *sincerely* own him in his *Words* and *Professions*. Wherefore unless we will *live up* to the Rules of our Religion, we were as good not to make any *visible* Profession of it; for our *Profession* will serve

no good Ends of Religion; it may indeed *disgrace* it in the Opinion of those who measure its Goodness by the *Lives* of its *Votaries*; for either they will think that our Religion *teaches* us to live as we do, and that will make them *abhor* it; or else they will imagine that notwithstanding our Profession we do *not believe* it, and that will make them *suspect* it to be a *Cheat* and *Imposture*. So that for any *Good* Christianity is like to reap from *wicked Christians* professing it, it were highly desirable that they would *renounce* their *Baptism*, and openly *declare* themselves *Atheists* or *Infidels*; because by their *Actions* they blaspheme the Religion they profess, and by *assuming* to themselves the *holy Name* of Christians they do but more openly *profane* it.

2. Another sort of *bodily Exercise* that is of *some*, though but *little* Account in Religion; is our voluntary undergoing of bodily *Rigours* or *Severities* upon the score of Religion. There is doubtless a very *wise* use to be made of *bodily Severities* in Religion, provided they be but used with that *Prudence* and *Caution* as they ought to be; for they are excellent Remedies against many of our inordinate fleshly *Inclinations*, to tame our extravagant *Appetites*, and to render them more tractable to the Commands of *Reason* and *Religion*: besides, that in the general

general they are of singular Use to wean our Souls from the Pleasures of the *Body*, which do often *corrupt* the palate of the *Mind*, and render it *incapable* of relishing divine Enjoyments. For if we *indulge* to our Appetities all those *lawful* Pleasures which they crave, our Souls will be apt to contract *too great* a Familiarity with the *Flesh*, and to be so taken up with the Delights and Satisfactions of it, as to neglect those *diviner* Pleasures for which they were created, and which are more *natural* and *congenial* to them; and considering that in our *future* State we must live without these *Bodies*, and take leave of all the Pleasures of them, it is very requisite that we should now before-hand *wean* and *abstract* our selves from the Enjoyments of *corporeal* Sense, that so when we come to *part* with them we may know how to be *happy* without them, and be fit to live the Lives of *naked* Spirits. And therefore we find that there has scarce been *any* Religion whatsoever pretending to qualify Men for *another* Life, but hath imposed *Fasting* and *Abstinence*, and other bodily *Severities*, as proper Means to *lustrate* and *purify* the *Mind*, and to *prepare* it for immediate Converses with God and separated Spirits; but then the Consequence was, that the over-strict *Imposition* of these *Instrumentals* of Religion occasioned a world of

of *Superstition*; for being so strictly imposed, they obtained so far in the Opinion of the World, as to be reckoned among the *Essentials* of Religion, and counted absolutely good, and in their own *Nature* pleasing and grateful unto God; which possibly by degrees introduced those *οἰκεῖα μυστήρια*, horrid and bloody *Mysteries* into the *Heathen Religion*. For Mankind being once possessed with such an Opinion of God, as to think he was pleased and delighted to see his poor Creatures *afflict* and punish themselves; it was easie from thence to infer that he would be much more pleased to see them *butcher* themselves, and sprinkle his Altars with their own *Blood*. And as this *over-weening* Opinion did probably introduce *human Sacrifices* into the *Heathen Religion*; so it is certain that it hath introduced sundry false Doctrines into the *Romish*; as particularly, that *Fasting*, and *Whipping* our selves, and going on *Pilgrimages*, are *meritorious* Things; that by them we *expiate* our Sins, and make *Satisfaction* to the Justice of God; as if the Guilt that binds us over to *eternal Perdition* were to be expiated by a sound *Whipping*, or a short *Pilgrimage* were a proportionable Commutation for the *eternal Penance* of Hell Fire. But these are the vain Imaginations of *Men*, who would faign impose Laws upon God, and

and prescribe to him the *Measures* of Punishment; who would *do* as wickedly as they please, and *suffer* what they please for so doing. But let us not deceive our selves, if *we* will choose to *sin*, it is reasonable that that *God* whom we offend by our *Sin* should choose and appoint our *Punishment*. It is by no means fit that *Criminals* should be their own *Judges*; for if they were, they would have very little Reason to be afraid of sinning; because they would be obliged to *suffer* no more for it than what they *pleased* themselves: but the Right of *punishing* is in the *offended Party*; and therefore if we will offend *God* by violating his *Laws*, we have no right to *choose* our own *Penance*, but must, whether we will or no, submit to what *He* thinks fit to inflict upon us; and what that is he hath told us before-hand, even *everlasting* Expulsion from his *Presence* into the Society and Portion of Devils, and damned Spirits. So that for us to expect to attone and satisfy *God* by little *voluntary* *Penances* of our own, is just as unreasonable as if a *Murderer* should cut off his little *Finger*, and thereupon expect to be excused from the *Penalty* of the *Law*.

And as these *bodily* *Severities* are no *Expiations* of our *Sins*, so neither are they in their own *Nature* *pleasing* and *grateful* unto *God*: for he is a *good* *God*, and an *universal*

sal Lover of all his Creation; and consequently can be no farther pleased with the Sufferings and Afflictions of any of his Creatures, than as they are *necessary* either to do *them* good, or to make them exemplary to *others*, or to vindicate the Honour of his own violated Laws; neither of which Ends are served by *voluntary* Penances and Severities as such, if they be not subordinated to the Ends of *Virtue* and *Religion*. For what can *Fasting* signify, if it be not designed to famish our *Lusts*? Can our hungry Bowels be a *delightful* Spectacle to that God who feeds the young Ravens, and takes so much care to provide for all his Creation? What *Virtue* is there in the Chastning of our *Bodies*, if it be not intended to humble and mortify our *Souls*? Do we think that that God, who is so zealous of our *Welfare*, can be recreated with our *Miseries*, or take pleasure in our *tragical* Looks, and *bloody* Shoulders? 'Tis true, so far as these things are *Instruments* of Good to us, they are pleasing unto God, even as all other *Instruments* of Religion; but it is not the suffering of our *Bodies* he is pleased with, but the good which it doth our *Souls*: but if they do our *Souls* no good, if they do not purify our *Affections*, and wean us from fleshly *Desires*, and make us more fit for the heavenly State, they are as insignificant

significant in the Account of God, as the paring of our Nails, or the clipping of our Hair.

3. Another sort of these *bodily Exercises* that are of *some*, though but *little account* in Religion, is *bodily Passions* in Religion. There is, I confess, an excellent Use to be made of our *bodily Passions* in the Exercise of our Religion, provided we do not place our Religion in them; for if we do, they will betray us into the grossest *Cheats* and *Impostures*. For in the general we find, that our *Passions* do wing our *intellectual Faculties*, and render them more *intense* and *expedit* in their Operations. For whilst the *Soul* and *Body* are *united* to one another, there is a *mutual Reflowing* and *Communication* of *Passions* between them, insomuch that whensoever the *Soul* is any ways affected with any *Object*, there immediately follows a suitable *Perturbation* or *Passion* in the *Body*; and then this *Passion* of the *Body*, as it is *grateful* or *ingrateful* to it, doth more vigorously affect the *Soul* with *Love* or *Aversion*; and then the *Soul* being thus reaffected and incited by the *bodily Passion*, will more *vehemently pursue* or *shun* the *Object* which caused its *first Motion* or *Affection*. When therefore our *Souls* and *Bodies* do thus *sympathize* with each other in the Exercises of Religion, we must necessarily

cessarily perform them with greater Vigour and Intention.

But to make this more plain to you, I will briefly instance in those four great Passions of Religion, viz. *Love*, and *Hatred*, and *Sorrow*, and *Joy*. As for that of *Love*; when the Soul is affected with God, or *Virtue*, or any other amiable Objects of Religion; immediately there follows a sweet and grateful Passion in the Body. For the *Heart* being dilated towards the beloved Object, puts the *Blood* and *Spirits* into a free and placid Motion, which diffuses a certain agreeable *Heat* into the *Breast*, and invigorates the *Brain* with a flood of active *Spirits*; and then the *Soul* being sensible of this grateful Emotion in the *Body*, is thereby more vigorously incited to pursue those amiable Objects wherewith she was first affected. And so for *Hatred*; when the *Soul* is practically convinced by the Arguments of Religion of the *Odiousness* of any Evil it forbids, the *Enmity* and *Hatred* she hath towards it causes an anxious Contradiction of the *Heart*, and Compression of the *Animal Spirits*, which produces a *Chillness* in the *Breast*, a retarding of the *Blood*, and an unequal motion of the *Pulse*; and then the *Soul* sympathizing with the *Body*, cannot but be sensible of this ungrateful Passion it is put into, which must needs add to her *Hatred* of those *odi-*

ous Objects which were the Cause of it, and cause her more *vehemently* to shun and avoid them. So again when the Soul is moved to *Sorrow* and *Repentance* for any past Sins and *Miscarriages*, the sad Regrets she suffers within her self produce a very doleful *Passion* in the *Body*; such as pinches the *Heart*, congeals the *Blood*, and causes an ungrateful *Languor* of the *Spirits*; and then by compassionating her grieved *Consort*, she is thereby excited to a higher degree of *Displeasure* against those Sins that caused its Grief and Disturbance. Lastly, when the Soul is *joyed* and *delighted* with any religious Object, or Exercise; by that sweet *Complacency* she enjoys within her self, there is produced a most *pleasant* Emotion in the *Body*, the *Animal Spirits* flowing to the *Heart* in an *equal* and *placid* Stream; where being arrived through its dilated *Orifices*, they sooth and tickle it into a most *sensible* Pleasure; and then the Soul being affected with the *Body's* Pleasure, doth from thence derive an *additional* Joy, which doth more vigorously encourage her to *pursue* those Objects, and *continue* those Exercises from whence her *Original Joy* proceeded.

So that, you see, that by reason of that *perpetual* *Intercourse* there is between our *Souls* and our *Bodies*, there is an excellent Use even of our *sensitive Passions* in Religion.

on. And it cannot be denied but that a gentle Temper of Body, whose *passions* are soft, and easie, and ductile, and apt to be commoved with the *Soul*, may be of great *advantage* in our Religious Exercises; because whensoever it is *religiously* affected, its *Passions* will be apt to *intend* and *quicken* the *Affections* of the *Soul*, and to render them more *vigorous* and *active*; but farther than *this*, they are of no account at all in Religion. For as there are many Men who are *sincerely good*, that yet cannot raise their *sensitive Passions* in their *religious Exercises*; that are heartily *sorry* for their *Sins*, and yet cannot *weep* for them; that do entirely *love* God and *delight* in his Service, and yet cannot put their *Blood* and *Spirits* into the *enravelling Emotions* of *sensitive Love* and *Joy*: so on the other hand, there are many gross *Hypocrites* that have not one dram of *true Piety* in them, who yet in their Religious Exercises can put themselves into wondrous *Transports* of *bodily Passion*; that can *pour* out their *Confessions* in *Floods* of *Tears*, and cause their *Hearts* to dilate into *Raptures* of *sensitive Love*, and their *Spirits* to tickle them into *Ecstasies* of *Joy*; which is purely to be resolved into the *different Tempers* of Mens Bodies, some Tempers being naturally so *calm* and *sedate*, as that they are scarce capable of being disturbed into a *Passion*;

sion; others again so soft and tender and *impressible*, that the most frivolous Fancy is able to raise a Commotion in them. And hence we see that some People can *weep* most heartily at the Misfortunes of Lovers in Plays and Romances, and as much *rejoyce* at their good Successes, though they know that both are *Fictions* and mere Idea's of *Fancy*; whereas others can scarce shed a *Tear* or raise a *sensitive Joy* at the *real* Calamities or Prosperities of a *Friend*; whom yet they love a great deal more than these Men can possibly do their *feigned* and *Romantick Heroes*. And yet alas how very often do Men place the *whole* of their Religion in these *mechanical Motions* of their *Blood* and *Spirits*; that think they are exceeding good, if they can but chase themselves into a devout *Passion*; and that it is an infallible Sign of *Godliness* that their *Blood* and *Spirits* are easily *moved* by religious Idea's, and apt to be *elevated* or *dejected* according as sad or joyous Arguments are *pathetically* represented to their *Fancies*: and though they do not understand the *Argument*, or which is all one to them, though that which is delivered for Argument is mere *Gibberish*, and insignificant *Canting*, that hath nothing of *Argument* or *Reality* in it, only some *empty Fiction* is conveyed to their *Fancies* by a musical Voice in *fanciful*

*Expressions*; yet because they are affected by it, and it raises a sensible Perturbation in their *Blood* and *Spirits*; they presently conclude it to be an *Income* of God, and an infallible Token of his *special Love* and *Favour* to them; as if it were a Sign of *Godliness*, and a *Mark* of *God's Favorites* to be affected with *Nonsense*, feathered with soft and delicate Phrases, and pointed with pathetick Accents.

Thus there are some Men who believe themselves to be *converted*, meerly because they have run through all the Stages of *Passion*, in that new Road of *Artificial Conversion* which some modern Authors have found out; for according as the *Work of Conversion* hath been described by some modern Authors, it is wholly placed in so many different Scenes of *Passion*. For first a Man must pass under the Discipline of the *Law*, and the Spirit of *Bondage*; that is, he must be *frightned* into a Sense of his lost and undone Condition, and in this Sense he must *grieve* bitterly for his Sins as the *Causes* of his Ruin and Perdition; and this is that which they call *Conviction* and *Compunction*. From hence he must proceed into the *Evangelical State*, and pass into the Spirit of *Adoption*, the Entrance of which is *Contrition* or *Humiliation*; which consists in an *ingenious Sorrow* for Sin, proceeding from a *passionate*

passionate Sense of God's *Love and Goodness*; and then having acted over all these mournful *Passions*, he embraces and lays hold upon *Christ*, which is the concluding Scene, and is altogether made up of *Joy and Exultation*, and so the *Work of Conversion* is *finish'd*. Now though I do not at all deny, but to the Conversion of an *habitual Sinner* it is indispensably necessary that he should be *convinc'd* of his Danger, and deeply *affected* with Sorrow and Remorse for his Folly and Wickedness; (and therefore would not be so understood, as if I intended to *discountenance* these *holy Passions*, which are such necessary *Introductions* to a *sincere Conversion*:) yet neither do I doubt, but by the help of a *melancholy Fancy* attended with soft and easie Passions, a Man may perform all these *Parts of Conversion*, and yet be never the better for it; for many times these *Passions* are only the necessary effects of a *diseased Fancy*, and are altogether as *mechanical* as the beating of our *Pulse*, or the Circulation of our *Blood*. And hence we see that this kind of *Conversion*, which wholly consists of *bodyly Passions*, doth commonly both begin and end with some languishing Distemper of the *Body*, in which the *Fancy* is over-clouded, and the Motion of the *Blood and Spirits* retarded by the Prevalence of *the melancholy Humours*;

which being once evacuated, the Man's Body returns again to its *former Temper*, and upon this he becomes the *same Man* again that he was before his *pretended Conversion*. And accordingly it is observed by those very Persons who place the whole Work of Conversion in these *Mechanical Passions*, that generally after the *Pangs of Regeneration* are over, their Converts grow *cold* and *careless*; and *remiss* in Religion; and so like to what they were in the State of *Nature*, that you would hardly believe they had ever been *converted*; which is a plain Evidence that this sort of *Conversion* doth not reach the *Soul*, that it doth not alter our *practical Judgment* of things, nor rationally determine our Wills to *new Choices* and *Resolutions*; and consequently that it is nothing but a mere Train of *sensitive Passions mechanically excited by the Fancy*. And hence you may observe in the Modern Stories of our *Religious Melancholians*, that they commonly pass out of one *Passion* into another without any manner of *Reasoning* and *Discourse*; now they are in the Depths of *Grief* and *Despair*, by and by upon the Pinnacle of *Joy* and *Affurance*; and yet they are the *same Men*, neither *better* nor *worse*, when they do *despair*, as when they are *assured*; and consequently have no *more Reason* to be *assured* now, than they had when they

they were encompassed with all the Horrors of *Desperation*. For the only Reason any Man hath to be *assured* of God's Love, is his *Likeness* and *Conformity* to Him; which is that alone that *endears* us unto God, and entitles us to the Promise of his *Favour*. And yet though these Men do not pretend to be *better*, or more *Godlike* now they are *assured*, than they were when they *despaired*; yet their Hearts are overwhelmed with Floods of *sensitive Joy*, and they are strangely comforted they know not *how* or *wherefore*: And though while they were in *Despair*, they thought of those Promises and Motives of *Comfort* that now *ravish* and *transport* them, and had every whit as much *Reason* to lay claim to them too; yet then they lay like Cakes of Ice at their Hearts without affording them the least Gleam of Warmth and Comfort; which is a plain evidence that both their *Joys* and *Sorrows* are the products of *bodily Temper*, and not of *Reason* and *Judgment*; because they pass out of one into the other without any interventive *Discourse*, and are agitated into contrary *Passions* whilst they are under the same *Rational Motives*; are dejected this moment, and comforted the next, which argues, that their *Reason* hath no hand in their *Passions*; for if it had, they could never be so contrarily affected. Nor can it be supposed,

that such *irrational* Passions are raised in them by the *Divine Spirit*; because He *ordinarily* works upon Men in an *humane* and *rational* way, beginning with their *Understandings*, and so perswading their *Wills*, and exciting their *Passions* by *rational* Motives and Arguments: Those Passions therefore that are not *so* excited can be resolved into no other Principle but that of *bodily Temper*. And accordingly you may observe, that all this Train of *Passions*, wherein too many Men do place the *whole* of their *Conversion*, are necessarily connected and chained to one another; so that if you move but the first Link, all the rest will naturally follow; which is a plain Argument that they may be excited not only in a *free* and *rational*, but also in a *necessary*, or *mechanical* way. As for instance, Suppose these Men before their *pretended Conversion* to have a good Dose of *Melancholy* in their Tempers, this will naturally dispose them to *terrible* and *mournful* Conceits; and being thus disposed, their tender *Fancies* are easily impressed with *dreadful* Images of the *Wrath* of God and their own *undone Condition*: And according as the *Temper* of their Bodies is more or less disposed to *fear*, so this *frightful* Passion continues *longer* or *shorter* upon 'em; if it continues *longer*, it will by the *reiterated* Impressions of those *dreadful Objects*

Objects that first raised it, by degrees be heightned into *Horror* and *Desperation*; and when it is so, then the Man is under *Conviction* of his undone Condition, and under the *Terrors* of the Law, and the *Spirit of Bondage*; which, according to the new *Method*, is always the *first* Step to *Conversion*. And when the *first* Fury of *Despair* is over, it naturally issues into a *deep Melancholy*, and there spends it self in woful Regrets, and self-condemning Reflections; and this is that which they call *Attrition*, or *Compunction*, which is the next Step to be taken in this *methodical* way of *Conversion*. And hence many People do continue many Years together in this *languishing* state; in all which time they believe themselves to be under the *Lash* of the *Law*, and the *Discipline* of the *Spirit of Bondage*; when, God knows, many times there is nothing in it but a mere *melancholy* Humour tinctured and heightned with *dismal Notions* of Religion. But then when the *Melancholy* begins to *disperse*, and to make way for the *Spirits* to flow into the *Brain* in a more *brisk* and *active* *Torrent*, and so to *warm* and *refresh* the drooping *Fancy*; they will by degrees scatter those horrid *Images* and *dismal Fancies* of Religion that rid the *Imagination*, and raised those tragical *Passions*; and so the *Man* will gradually emerge out of the *Spirit of Bondage*.

into a more comfortable and Evangelical Condition. For now his Fancy being something more *lightsome*, but still retaining some *Reliques* of its former Darkness, will be disposed for *grateful* as well as *dismal* Phantasms, and to be impressed by *lovely* and *joyous*, as well as *terrible* and *mournful* Objects. So that if now God or *Christ*, or any other Object of Religion, be but represented to the Man in such a *Dress* of Metaphors and glistering Allusions, as is apt to affect his *carnalized* Fancy, he will presently form such *charming* Conceits and *pleasant* Imaginations of them, as will necessarily put his Blood and Spirits into a most *amorous* Emotion towards them; so that now he shall seem *inflamed* with the Love of *Christ*, and fancy him *twined* in his Arms and Embraces: whereas in *Reality* the Thing he is so infinitely fond of, is nothing but an *Idol* of his own Fancy, a mere *Baby-Christ*, drest up by his own *Imagination* in all the Charms of *sensual* Beauty, and furnished with Smiles, and Kisses, and Caresses, and all the pretty Indearments of a doating Lover. And now the Man's Fancy being thus partly hung with fine Pictures of *Christ*, those Reliques of *Melancholy* Vapours that are yet remaining in it, will very much dispose it to *sad* and *mournful* Conceits; especially when this *Idol* of *Christ*, which he so much doats upon,

on, shall be represented as *weeping* over his Sins, and *grieved* at the Unkindnesses he shews him. And now his Fancy being thus furnished with such a Mixture of *amorous* and *mournful* Imaginations, must necessarily beget in him a Mixture of *Love* and *Grief* and cause him to *mourn* for his Sins ; because they make his Saviour *grieve* whom he seems to *love* so dearly : And this is *Humiliation*, which is the *third Stage* in this *imaginary* Road of Conversion. And now the Man having set up so *gay* an Image of Christ in his Fancy, and felt within himself such *sensible* Pangs of *Love* towards him, and *Grief* for the Affronts and Unkindnesses he hath offered him, his *amorous* Imagination will presently suggest to him, that doubtless so *sweet* a Saviour cannot but be conquered with all these *passionate* Indearments, and smitten with a *reciprocal* Love upon so many *feeling* Expressions of his Kindness towards him ; and being possessed with this Imagination, he will presently fancy his *dear* Image of Christ into all the Postures of a transported *Lover* ; smiling upon him, weeping over him, and spreading out his Arms to embrace him ; upon which there will follow such a *sweet* Effusion of his Spirits towards his enamoured Saviour, that he will fancy himself to be leaping into his Arms, and *rolling* in his Bosom, and *resting*, and *lean-*

*leaning, and relying upon him.* And now his Fancy having carried him to his *Journey's End*, and lodged him in the Embraces of his *Saviour*, O the Joy and Ravishment ! he feels his Heart pant through *Excess* of Delight, and is ready to break with its own *Raptures*. And thus you see how this whole Method of *Conversion* may be easily transacted by an *active* and *melancholy* Fancy.

And as it *may* be, so I doubt not but many times it is; for how many Men are there who strongly *imagine* themselves to have been *converted*, that yet are never the *better* for it, being still as averse unto *God* and *true Goodness* as ever they were before ; nay and many times are so far from being *better'd* by their *Conversion*, that they are a great deal the *worse* for it ; for instead of *forsaking* all *Sin*, which is that wherein *true Conversion* doth consist, they only *shift* their *Vices*, and many times in laying *one Devil*, they *conjure up* *seven worse* in the *room* of it. Perhaps before they *fan*ned themselves to have been *converted*, they were *openly lewd* and *profane* ; they would swear and be drunk, and *wallow* in *Sensuality* and *Voluptuousness* ; but notwithstanding these *beastly* and *damnable Crimes*, they had some very *amiable Qualities* in them ; they were *courteous* and *affable*, and *kind* and *obliging* ; *faithful* in their *Professions*, and *just* and *honest*.

honest in their Dealings ; but now alas ! by passing through these dismal Stages of pretended Conversion, they have contracted such a mass of melancholy Humours as hath quite soured their sweet and lovely Tempers into *Pride* and *Envie* *Peevishness* and *Faction*, *Insolence* and *Censoriousness*, and all the other Ingredients of a sullen and unsociable Nature. So that though now indeed they will not be openly lewd and profane, as they were before, yet, which is a great deal worse, they will be *false* and *ill-natur'd*, and *griping* and *ungovernable* ; and, which is worst of all, they will be all this while under the Disguise of *Religion*, and the Patronage of a deceived *Conscience* : so that whereas their former Vices had only the Possession of their *Wills*, but not of their *Consciences*, these are seized of *both*, which renders their Condition the more dangerous. For heretofore *Virtue* and *Religion* had a strong Party within them, there being a Law in their *Minds* that warred against the Law in their *Members* ; but now all is subdued to the Dominion of their *Sins*, and their *Wills* and *Consciences*, like *Simeon* and *Levi*, become *Brother* *in* *Iniquity*. Whilst therefore Men place their Religion in such *artificial* Trains of *Passion*, they will be liable to all manner of *Cheats* and *Impostures*. For the Generality of Men being ignorant of the Power of *Me-*  
*lancholy*,

*Lancholy*, and of the Frame and Structure of their own *Bodies*; if their *Fancies* are but tinctured with Religion, they will be apt to attribute every extraordinary Emotion they feel to the immediate Influence of the *Spirit of God*, and to account that to be *Grace* and *Inspiration* which is a mere necessary Effect of *Matter* and *Motion*; and being once possessed with this Conceit, they lie open to all the Follies of *Enthusiasm*; for now nothing will satisfy them but *Heats* of *Fancy*, and *Transports* of *Passion*; and whilst they should be attending to the *so' er* Dictates of *Scripture* and right *Reason*, they will be looking for *Incomes*, and *Impulses*, and *secret Manifestations*; and consequently, will be apt to interpret every odd *Whimsey* for an inward Whisper from *Heaven*, and every brisk *Emotion* of their Spirits for an immediate Smile of *God's Countenance*; than which, I dare boldly say, there is nothing more *mischievous* to Religion, or *contrary* to the Life and Power of it. For Religion is a *wise*, a *still*, and *silent* thing, that consists not in *Frisks* of *Fancy*, and *Whirlwinds* of *Passion*; but in a *divine* Temper of Mind, and an universal *Resignation* of our Wills to God; and this not only in intermittent *Fits* of *Passion*, but in the midst of *cool* Thoughts and *calm* Deliberations. For *true Religion* is a State of a *fixt* and *constant* Nature, that doth

doth not come and go, like the Colours of a blushing Face, but is the *natural* and *true* Complexion of the Soul. How religious soever therefore we may be in our passionate *Heats* and *Transports*, it is altogether insignificant, unless the *standing Temper* of our Minds be *good*, and our Religion be settled in our *Natures*. For though it cannot be denied but these our *bodily* Passions do profit *something*, as they are useful *Instruments* of Religion; yet I think it is very apparent from what hath been said, that he who places his Religion in them doth but *deceive* his own Soul.

4. Another sort of *bodily* Exercise that is of *some*, though but *little* Account in Religion, is *Fluency* and *Volubility* in Religious Exercises, or a Readiness of wording our Thoughts in *proper* and *affecting* Expressions; either in *Prayer* to God, or in *speaking* of God and Things divine: the proper Use of which is this, that in *Prayer* it is apt to *excite* and *kindle* our devout and religious Affections. For besides that *Scantiness* of Words in *Prayer* doth *divert* the Mind by putting it to the Trouble of inventing *new Expressions* to clothe its Thoughts and Desires, which because of its Inability to attend many things at once, must needs *interrupt* its Zeal and Intention, and so make *Breaks* and *Chasms* in its Devotions; whereas when a

Man

Man expresses himself *easily* and *fluently*, so that his *Words* keep pace with his *Desires* and *Affections*, he will be able to keep his *Thoughts* more *intent*, and to *fix* himself upon *God* with all the *united Vigour* of his *Mind*, which not being disturbed with the *Difficulty* of expressing its *Desires*, will be the more at leisure to *intend* them, that so its *Devotions* may flow *secundo flumine*, in a more *easie* and *undisturbed Current*: besides which, I say, we all find by *Experience*, that *proper* and *fluent Expressions* are in their own *Nature* apt to *warm* and *heighten* our *Affections*, which nothing hath a greater *Influence* in than the *Charms* of *pathetical Oratory*. To be able therefore to word our *Prayers* in *proper* and *ready Expressions*, is of considerable *Advantage* to our *Devotions*; our *Words* being so apt to affect our *Minds*, and our *Passions* to keep time with the *Musick* of our own *Language*: and whilst we wear these *Bodies* about us, and our *Souls* are so clogged and depressed with *fleshy Desires*, we have need enough to use all *Arts* and *Advantages* of *Spiriting* and *enlivening* our *Devotions*. But yet I confess, of all these *bodily Exercises*, this is the *least considerable* in *Religion*; because we may easily supply the *Defect* of *natural Fluency* by excellent *Forms* of *Prayer*, the *Use* of which is doubtless far more *expedient* than the best of

of our *Extempore* Effusions. For he that uses a *Form*, hath nothing else to do in Prayer but only to *recollect* his own Thoughts, and fix them upon God ; and to keep his *Mind* affected with a *due Sense* of the Divine *Majesty*, and his own *Need* of and *Dependance* upon him : whereas he that prays *extempore*, besides all this, is concerned to *invent* proper and apt *Expressions*, lest he should be *impertinent* or *indecent* in his Addresses unto God ; unless he expects that the *Spirit* should *immediately* dictate to him the Words of his Prayer, which is to suppose himself a Person *immediately inspired*, and his Prayer of *Divine Revelation* ; and consequently, of equal Authority with the *Scriptures* themselves. But the best *Religious Use* that can be made of *Fluency* and *Volubility* of Speech, is in speaking to others of *God* and *Things Divine* ; here it is useful indeed to make a Man an *Orator* for *Religion*, and to enable him to recommend it more *effectually* to others. Thus far therefore this sort of *bodily Exercise* may be *profitable*, both as it may be made *instrumental* to raise our *own Devotions*, and to propagate true *Piety* unto others ; but beyond this, I know no place at all that it hath in *Religion* : for there is no doubt but we may be very *good Men* without this *Gift* of *Fluency*, and very *bad Men* with it, there being no *Necessity* of  
Conse-

Consequence from an *honest* Heart to a *volatile* Tongue. And certainly that which proceeds from no *higher* Principle than meer *natural* Enthusiasm, and consequently may be easily attained by Persons grossly *hypocritical* and *debauched*, ought not to be looked upon as a Mark of *Godliness*. And yet alas! how many Men are there that place *all* their *Religion* in their *Tongues*, and esteem it as a certain Sign of *Grace* that they are able to pray in *fluent* Expressions, and to talk of God in *rapturous* Flights of Fancy? For they being most commonly *straitned* in their Religious Exercises, and not able to *vent* themselves with any *Freedom* or *Readiness*; when they fall into an extraordinary *Fit* of *Fluency* and *Enlargement*, of which they can give nonnatural Account, they presently conclude it to be an *immediate* Gift of God's *Spirit*, and a special Token of his *peculiar* Favour to them. And accordingly, if you peruse the late Histories of the *spiritual Experiences* of our *modern* Converts, you will find that they contain little else but strange Relations of their *rapturous* Discourses, and *wondrous* *Enlargements* in *Prayer*; which because they have something *extraordinary* in them, are generally thought to be the immediate Effects of the *Divine* *Spirit*: whereas commonly they proceed meerly from the present *Temper* of the *Body*, and are as *mechanical* as any

any other Operations of *Nature*. For let a Man's Body be but put into a fervent Temper, his Spirits into quick but *manageable* Motions, this will naturally produce in him a more fine and *exquisite* Power of Perception, by causing the Images of Things to come faster into his Fancy, and to appear more *distinct* there; and then his Fancy being more *pregnant* with new Idea's and Images than it uses to be, his Expressions must necessarily be more *fluent* and *easy*. But then if when this *natural Fervour* of his Temper be intended with Vapours of heated *Melancholy*, his Fancy be but often impressed and rubbed upon with the most vehement and moving Objects of Religion, such as *God* and *Christ*, and *Heaven* and *Hell*; it must necessarily raise in him great and *vehement* Passions, and dictate to him *pathetick* and *rapturous* Expressions. And this hath been commonly experimented by the *Devoto's* of all Religions; for even among the devout *Turks* and *Heathens* we may find as notorious Instances of those *Incomes* and *Enlargements*, as in any of our *modern Histories* of *Christian Experiences*. Thus the *Heathen* Poets, in all high Flushes of their Fancy, conceited themselves *divinely inspired*: *Est Deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo.* And that great Orator *Aristides* positively affirms himself to be *inspired* in his Orations; be-  
D cause

cause sometimes he felt in himself an *extra-ordinary Vein of Fluency*, which was only excited by a brisker Agitation of his Spirits. Wherefore it is not at all to be wondered at if, when Men are employed in Religious Exercises, the same *natural Enthusiasm*, especially when it is exalted by *Religious Melancholy*, should so wing and inspire their Fancies. For there is no Man whatsoever, that is but *religiously inclined*, and of a *soft and impressive Temper*, but by *familiarizing* his Fancy to the great Objects of *Religion*, and setting them before his Mind in *distinct* and *affecting Idea's*, may easily chafe himself into such a *Pathos* as to be able to talk to, or of, *God and Religion*, in *lofty and rapturous Strains of Divine Rhetorick*; nor is it any Argument of such a Man's being *inspired*, that his Discourse doth so *move* and *affect* those that hear him; because all Language that is *soft, fluent and pathetical*, is naturally apt to make deep *Impressions* on the *Auditors*. For even the *Grecian Sophists*, as *Plutarch* tells us, by their *singing Tones*, and *honied Words*, and *effeminate Phrases* and *Accents*, did very often *transport* their *Auditors* into a kind of *Bacchical Enthusiasm*: And no doubt but the *Hearers* of whom he speaks, who were wont to applaud their *Orators* at the End of their *Declamations* with a *Στίχος, Θεοφόριτος, Σαμονίτος, ἀπερσίτος*, divinely,

divinely, heavenly, preciously, unimitably spoken, found themselves as much *moved*, as many a Man doth at a Sermon ; who yet thinks it is not the *Art* of the Preacher, but the *Spirit* of God speaking *in* and *by* him that warms and excites them. Wherefore as we would not deceive and undo our own *Souls*, let us have a great care that we do not place our Religion in any such *Enthusiastick* Fervors of *Spirit*, and Overflowings of *Fancy* ; for though this may be a *helpful* Instrument to us in our Religious Exercises, yet it is not by this that we are to estimate the *Goodness* of them, but by those *Laws* and *Circumstances* which do *moralize* humane Actions, and render them *reasonable*, and *holy*, and *good*. For 'tis not in loud *Noises* or melting *Expressions* that the *divine* Spirit is discovered, but in a *divine* *Nature* and *God-like* *Disposition* ; and the Effects of true Religion are not to be look'd for in *Words* and *Talk*, but in *Life* and *Action* ; and therefore St. Paul tells the *Corinthians*, some of whom, it seems, had too great an Opinion of his Way of Religious *Rhetorication*, that he would come among them and know, *not the speech of them that were puffed up, but the power* ; for the *Kingdom* of God, saith he, *consisteth not in word, but in power*, 1 Cor. iv. 19, 20.

Fifthly, Another sort of *bodily* Exercise that is of *some*, thought but *little*, Account in Religion, is *outward* and *bodily* Worship. There is no doubt but we ought, when we are worshipping God, to signify the *profound* sense that we have of his Majesty and Greatness by *outward* Adorations and an *humble* and *lowly* Demeanour. For though we may signify to God the *Honour* and *Worship* that we owe him by the *internal* Acts of our *Mind*, by our *Love*, and *Fear*, and *Hope*, and *Admiration*, because he sees our *Hearts* and discerns the most *secret* Motions of our *Souls*; yet since to him we owe the Members of our *Bodies*, as well as the Faculties of our *Minds*, it is very reasonable that we should worship him with both, that both our *Bodies* and *Minds* should offer the *Tribute* of Homage which they owe to the *Fountain* of their Beings; that so having each of them a share in the Bounties of God, they may be *Co-partners* too in the Returns of *Gratitude* to him. And though the *internal* Acts of our *Minds* do sufficiently signify unto God our *Esteem* and *Veneration* of Him, yet it is highly reasonable, especially in our *publick* Addresses to him, that we should signify it to *Men* also, that *they* may be excited by our *Example* to glorify God, and to acknowledge and adore the infinite *Perfections* of his Nature: and we have no other way

way to signify to *Men* our Veneration of God, but only by *corporeal Actions*, that is, by such *Actions* or *Gestures* of the Body as either by *Nature* or by *Custom* are significant of our inward Esteem and Adoration of him. And this, without doubt, is a Part of *Natural Religion*; forasmuch as there never was any People of *any Religion* whatsoever, but what have always expressed their Veneration of the *Divinities* whom they owned, by such *external Reverences* as were customary amongst them. And accordingly we are enjoyned in Scripture to offer up unto God the Homage of our *Bodies* as well as of our *Souls*; *to worship, and bow down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker*, Psal. xcv. 6. and *to glorifie him with our Souls and Bodies, which are his*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. And when the Devil solicited our Saviour with the Promise of all the Kingdoms of the World to bow down and worship him, that is, to render him *external Homage* and *Reverence*, our Saviour rejects the Motion with an *it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, Matth. iv. 10. which Words must be understood of *external* as well as *internal* *Worship*, otherwise his Answer is no wise *pertinent* to the Devil's Proposals, which extended only to *external* *Worship* and *Adoration*.

And as *bodily Worship* is enjoyed by express Precept, so it is warranted by the concurrent Examples of all holy Men; for in the *Old Testament* you have almost as many Examples of it, as there are Instances of devout and religious Persons: and so observant were the Jews of all *external Reverence* in their *Religious Exercises*, that to fall down and kneel before the *Lord our Maker* seems to have been *Proverbial* of their Prayers and Publick Worship. And lest any Man should imagine these *bodily Reverences* to have been Part of that *Ceremonial Worship* that was abolish'd by the *Gospel*, there are sufficient Examples of it recorded in the *New Testament* both to excite and warrant our *Imitation*. For even the blessed *Jesus himself* who thought it *no Robbery to be equal with God*, yet being in the *Form of a Servant*, he thought it *no scorn to kneel and prostrate himself before him*; for thus when he was in his last Agony, it is said, that *he fell on his face, and prayed*, Matth. xxxvi. 39. which in those Eastern Countries was a Signification of the *profoundest Reverence*: and afterwards when having awoke his Disciples, he returned to his Prayer again, St. *Luke* tells us that *he fell upon his knees and prayed*, Luke xxii. 41. Thus of *St. Stephen*, when he was breathing out his Soul in that hearty Prayer for his Enemies, it is said that *he kneeled*

*down*.

down, and cried with a loud voice, *Lord, lay not this Sin to their Charge*, Acts vii. 60. So also St. Peter, when he came to raise *Tabitha* from the dead, is said to *kneel down and pray*, Acts ix. 40. And St. Paul acquainting the *Ephesians* how earnestly he prayed for them, thus expresses himself; *for this Cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Ephes. iii. 14. And when he was going to *Rome*, and had taken his last Farewell of the Brethren at *Miletum*, it is said that he *kneeled down, and prayed with them*, Acts xx. 36. And how loudly soever some of our *new-fashioned Christians* may explode *external Reverence* under a Pretence of worshipping God in a more *spiritual Manner*, it is certain that there never was any thing even *externally* more devout and solemn than the Religious Assemblies of the *Primitive Christians*; for generally at the Reading of their *publick Liturgies*, the whole Congregation kneeled down upon the bare Floor with their *Heads uncovered*, their *Eyes lift up to Heaven*, and their *Hands stretched forth* in fashion of a *Cross*; and then the whole Congregation being composed into a deep *Silence*, the Minister began the *publick Service* in a most *serious and humble manner*, not throwing about his *Prayers* at random with a *clamorous, wild, and confused Voice*, but pronouncing them with a most *decorous*

*Calmness and Modesty*: the People in the mean time demeaning themselves so *solemnly* and *uniformly*, that you would have thought the whole Assembly to have been animated with *one Soul*, and that Soul to have been nothing else but a *vital Sense* of the adorable Majesty and supereminent Perfections of God. So heavenly wide was the *Primitive Pattern* from the Rudeness and Irreverence of our *modern Devotions*, that I doubt not should those blessed Martyrs and Confessors of our *holy Religion* arise from their Graves, and come into our *publick Assemblies*, they would suspect that we met together rather to be *worshipp'd* by God than to *worship* him; our usual Postures being much fitter for *Judges* than for *Supplicants*, and such as rather bespeak us to be receiving Petitions *from* God, than offering up Prayers *to* him. For what *Sign* do we give that we come to worship the *great Majesty* above, when we rudely squat upon our Seats with our Hats half on, as if we thought it too great a Condescension to *uncover* our Heads, and *kneel* before the *Lord our Maker*; and that we made not bold enough with him, unless we treated him as our *Fellow*, and it were a piece of *holy Familiarity* to be *saucy* in our *Language*, and *irreverent* in our *Addresses* to him?

But

But by what hath been said I think it is apparent, that *bodily* Worship is of so much *Account* and *Necessity* in Religion, that to neglect it is a Piece of great *Injustice* to God, and an high *Affront* to his Majesty, whereunto we owe the *lowlieſt* Homage and Adoration. But after all it must be acknowledged, that unless our *bodily* Worship be attended with an *inward lively* Sense of God, with great and worthy *Thoughts* of him and suitable *Affections* towards him, it is all but a perfect *Pageantry*; which, tho' it makes a goodly *Shew*, hath nothing of *Subſtance* or *Reality* in it: Nay if by those *external* Reverences we render him, we do not express the *inward* Veneration of our Souls; while we pretend to *worſhip* him, we *mock* him to his Face; and by offering him a *Shell* which hath no *Kernel* in it, we only seek to put a Trick upon him, to make him believe we *honour* and *adore* him, when in reality we do but more demurely *flout* him, and with our *Mock-Obeyſances* affront him with greater Ceremony: If therefore we do not bow our *Hearts* before him as well as our *Knees*, in our most solemn Addresses to him, we are but so many liveless *Images* of Prayer, that, like our Grandfathers Statues on their Tombs, have our Hands and Eyes lift up to *Heaven*, but no *Soul* to animate our Devotions. But God expects that those that wor-

worship Him should approach him with *pure* and *humble* Minds, with their Wills inspired with *divine* Affections, and their Souls touched with an *over-awing* Sense of his Majesty; without which he accounts all our *bodily* Adorations to be nothing but *demure* Scorns, and *complemental* Mockeries; and therefore upon this very Account God denounced most fearful Judgments against *Israël*, because *they draw near him with their mouths, and with their lips did honour him, when their hearts were removed far from him,* Isa. xxix. 13.

Sixthly, and lastly, Another sort of *bodily* Exercise that is of *some*, tho' but *little* Account in Religion, is a mere outward *Form* or *Round* of Religious Duties, such as *saying* of our Prayers, *hearing* the Word of God, and *receiving* of Sacraments, and the like; which are all of them expressly enjoined by the Christian Religion, as the *Means* by which we are to purge our Minds from all *Impurity* and *Wickedness*, and to acquire those *divine* *Habits* of Piety and Virtue, which are necessary to qualify us for *eternal Life*: And without all doubt, such *Means* they are as, if *rightly* used, will by the Blessing of God, and their own natural Efficacy, exceedingly *conduce* to those great and worthy *Ends* for which they were ordained. For what *Means* can be more conducive to our Reformation and

and Amendment, than *constant* and *diligent* Prayer? for, besides that hereby we *move* God to enable us to our Duty by his own *Grace* and *Assistance*; by these our *solemn* Addresses to him we take an *effectual* Course to *abstract* our Minds from *carnal* and *sensitive* Things; to *excite* and *raise* our Affections towards God, and inspire our Souls with an awful Sense of his Majesty; which are the most *rational* Antidotes we can take against the venomous Temptations of *Sin*. How necessary is it to make us thoroughly good, that we should seriously and diligently attend upon the *Preaching* and *publick Ministers* of God's Word; the great *End* of which is to state and describe the *Bounds* of *Christian* Duty, and to explain and enforce those mighty Motives which *Christianity* urges to oblige us to it? both which are indispensably *necessary* to our Reformation; because a Man cannot be *good*, unless he *knows* his Duty, and when he *knows* it, he will not be *good*, unless he be *persuaded* to it. What can be more conducive to our *Growth* and *Progress* in all *Christian* Grace and Virtue, than frequent *Receiving* of the Holy Sacrament? which, besides as it is a *Channel* and *Conveyance* of the Divine Grace and *Assistance* to all *worthy* Communicants, doth *sensibly* represent to us one of the mightest Arguments to *Obedience* in all the *Christian* Religion, *viz.* the *Death* and

and *Sacrifice* of our blessed Redeemer. For here we see his bloody Tragedy acted before our Eyes, the breaking of his *Body* and the pouring out of his *Blood* for us being *visibly* represented to us; which dismal Spectacle (if we have any Remains of Ingenuity in us) cannot but *affect* us both with Love to *Him* who suffered so deeply for us, and with Horror against our *Sins*, which brought those *Sufferings* upon Him: and being thus affected, how can we forbear vowed *Revenge* upon our *Sins*, and perpetual *Obedience* to our most loving *Redeemer*, which is one great End of this *sacred Festival*? So that these *outward Duties* are not only *necessary*, as they are *enjoined* by our Religion, but also as they are *effectual* Means and Instruments of that *internal* Piety and Virtue, which our Religion doth *principally* require and design: and therefore doubtless it cannot but be a great *Sin* for any Christian to live in the *ordinary Neglect* of these *instrumental Duties*, because in so doing he doth not only *affront* the Authority of that holy Religion to which he hath vowed *Submission* and *Obedience*, but also rejects the *Means* of his own *Recovery* and *Reformation*, and so doth openly declare himself a *reckless profigate Creature*, one that neither *is* good, nor ever *intends* to be so. But yet after all it must be acknowledged, that he that *only* prays,

prays, and hears, and receives Sacraments, and places *all* his Religion in a perpetual Round of these *outward* Performances, hath nothing of the *Life* and *Spirit* of true Religion in him: For, as I have already observed to you, these *Duties* are intended only for *Means* and *Instruments* of that *internal* Purity of Mind, and those *Divine* and *Godlike* Dispositions of Soul, wherein the *Life* and *Substance* of Religion doth consist. Now you know it is not barely the using of *Means* that either *is* or *doth* Good, but the using them to some good *End* or *Purpose*: as for instance, *Books* are *Means* and *Instruments* of *Learning*; but it is not *barely* the using of *Books*, or turning over the *Leaves* of them, that will make Men *wise* or *learned*; but the using them so, as to *understand* the *Contents* of them, and acquaint our selves with the *Things* and *Notions* contained in them. Thus *Prayer*, and *Hearing* the Word of God, and *Receiving* of Sacraments, are doubtless excellent *Means* to make Men *good* and *virtuous*; but *barely* to use them, without any *farther* Intention, is to do a thing that signifies *nothing*, that neither is good in it *self*, nor will do any good to *us*: If we would use them to any *Purpose*, we must use them to the *End* they are designed for, or else we had as good not use them at all. For we may as soon become good *Scholars* barely by turning over

over the *Leaves* of learned Books, as we shall good *Christians* barely by *praying*, and *hearing*, and *receiving*. If we do not *pray* to the End we may be more *humble* and *heavenly-minded*; if we do not *hear*, and *receive* *Sacraments* to the End, we may be more *just* and *charitable* and *meek* and *temperate*; we take a great deal of Pains to no purpose. For tho' a Hammer and a File are excellent Tools to make a Watch or a Clock, or any such curious Machin; yet doubtless you would account that Man extremely impertinent that should reckon himself a skilful Mechanick merely because he knocks and files with them. And by the same Rule, tho' *Prayers* and *Sacraments* are excellent *Instruments* of Christian *Piety* and *Virtue*, yet it is a ridiculous Vanity for a Man to esteem himself a good Christian, merely because he *prays* and *communicates*; because as the Art of the Mechanick consists not barely in using his Tools, but in using them so, as to perfect and accomplish his Work with them; so the Virtue of a Christian consists not barely in Praying, Hearing, and Receiving, but in using these Duties with that Religious *Art* and *Skill*, as is necessary to render them effectually subservient to the Ends of *Piety* and *Virtue*; and unless we use them to these Ends, we were as good not use them at all for any Benefit we are likely to reap from them.

them. For what doth it signify for a Man to *confess* his Sins to God, if he only go round in a Circle of *confessing* and *sinning*, and *sining* and *confessing* again? Is it any Pleasure to the Almighty, do we think, to hear us read over, with tragical Looks and woful Tones, the odious Catalogue of our uncancelled Guilts? is he so fond of the Affronts and Injuries we do him, as to take delight in hearing them recounted? No, doubtless, it is impossible. 'Tis true, he hath commanded us to *confess* our Sins to him; but why hath he done so? why, that our *Confession* might be instrumental to our *Reformation*; that it might affect us with *Shame* and *Sorrow* for our Sins, and *Horror* and *Indignation* against them; and if this be not the *Effect* of it, we do but blazon our *Shame*, when we confess our *Sins*, and prefer a Bill of *Indictment* against our selves. To what purpose do we daily offer up our *Prayers* unto God, if we do not endeavour by our *Lives* to please him? Can we imagine him so easie a Soveraign as to be soothed and flattered with the humble *Petitions* and *Intreaties* of open and avowed *Rebels*? Certainly if we do, we are infinitely mistaken: he bids us *pray* to him indeed, but why? why, that by our *constant* Addresses to him we might be always *affected* with so deep a Sense of his *Sovereignty* over us and our *own Dependence*.

dance upon him, as might keep us continually in *Awe* of Him ; and if this be not the *Effect* of our *Prayers*, we only talk to the Air, and spend our Breath to no purpose. To what End do we praise God, and make Rhetorical *Acknowledgments* of his *Glory* and *Goodness*, if we do not *imitate* him in those *Perfections* for which we admire and laud him ? Do we think so *wise*, so *great* a Being can ever be pleased and tickled to hear himself *extolled* and *commended* by a little of that fading Breach which *himself* gave being to ? alas ! no ; he needs not our *poor Praises* to emblazon and magnify him, being *infinitely glorious* in his own *Perfections*, and a sufficient Stage and Theatre to *Himself*. 'Tis true he bids us *praise* him, but why ? why, that he might provoke us to *imitate* what we do *commend*, and to transcribe into our *own selves* those adorable *Perfections* which we laud and admire in *Him* ; and if this be not the *Effect* of our *praising* him, all the Good we say of him is nothing but *Flattery* and *Complement*. To what purpose do we come to Church to *hear* Sermons and pious Exhortations, if we do not *live* them too ? Do we think to *please* God by meeting together to gratify our *Ears* or *Curiosity* with some new Notions, or quaint Piece of Oratory ? If we do, we are much mistaken. He hath *commanded* us indeed, diligently to attend the publick

publick *Preaching* and *Ministers* of Religion; and why hath he done so, but only that we might *learn* his Will, and be *instructed* in the Motives to Obedience? And if this be not the *Effect* of our Hearing, we had as good spend our time in hearing the whistling of the Wind, or the roaring of the Sea. In a word, to what *End* do we receive the holy *Sacrament*, if we do not improve in Virtue by it? Do you think to please an *All-wise* God by eating a little *Bread*, and drinking a little *Wine*, in a devout and humble *Posture*? Is it likely that so *wise* a Being should be taken with such an *insignificant* Trifle? 'Tis true, He hath instituted this holy Solemnity for a *perpetual Memory* of our Saviour's Passion; but is this all do you think? Has he commanded us to meet, and eat and drink together, only to *remember* that a great while ago the blessed *Jesus* was crucified at *Jerusalem*? no, doubtless; that which he *ultimately* designed by this solemn Memorial was to inflame our *Love*, to confirm our *Faith*, and strengthen our Resolutions of *Obedience*; and if this be not the *Effect* of it, our receiving the *Sacrament* is of no more Account in Religion, than if we should eat and drink only to satisfy our *Hunger* and *Thirst*. This I have the longer insisted upon, because it is so ordinary for Men to place *all* their Re-

E religion

ligion in these *instrumental Duties*, and to believe themselves highly in favour with God, *merely* because they *pray* very often, and hear a great many *Sermons*, and are constant Communicants at the *Lord's Table*; when God knows all this is only the Religion of the *Means*, and is good only as it tends farther to produce in us a *divine Temper* of Mind, and to make us *sober*, and *righteous*, and *godly* in this present World; which if it doth not effect, it doth nothing at all, but is altogether *vain* and *insignificant*. Wherefore as you would not deceive and ruin your own Souls, beware of mistaking the *Means* of Godliness for *Godliness* it self, and of taking up you *Rest there*, where you should only *bait*, in order to a farther Progress; least falling short of your *Duty*, you fall short of the *Reward* of it, and in the End receive your Portion with *Hypocrites* in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone.

2. Having shewed what that *bodily Exercise* is which profits *something* in Religion, tho', compared with Godliness it self, but *very little*; I now proceed to the second thing proposed, which was to shew you in what Respects it is that this *bodily Exercise* doth profit but *little*. In general it profits but *little* in respect of thole *great* and *noble* Ends

Ends which Religion doth most principally aim at; for there are four *great* Advantages which Religion doth principally design and intend us:

1. To *reconcile* us unto God;
2. To *perfect* our Natures;
3. To *intitle* us to Heaven;
4. To *qualify* us for *Heaven*;

And to each of these, these kinds of *bodily* Exercise are no farther *profitable* than as they conduce to a *holy Life* and *internal Purity* and *Goodness*; which is that alone by which these *great* Advantages are to be obtained: so that tho' they profit *something*, yea very *much*, as they are *Means* of *Godliness*, yet compared with *Godliness it self*, they profit but very *little*; because these are only *instrumental* to make us *godly*, but it is *Godliness alone* that *reconciles* us unto God, and *perfects* our Natures, and *qualifies* us for Heaven. In these four Respects therefore these kinds of *bodily* Exercise do, in comparison with *Godliness*, profit but very *little*.

1. As to the *reconciling* us to God. 'Tis true, this *bodily* Religion is *instrumental* to reconcile us unto God, so far as it tends to *purify* our Minds, and to *inspire* us with a divine and God-like Nature; but farther than this, it hath no Influence at all upon it; for there is nothing can *reconcile* God to us, or us to God, but only a *mutual Likeness*

and *Agreement*. — While we continue in our *Sins*, we cannot love God, our *Nature* being repugnant to *His*, who is infinitely *holy*, and *pure*, and *good*; nor can *He* love *us*, *His Nature* being repugnant to *ours*, which is *vile*, and *wicked*, and *unreasonable*. And how can two *Natures* be reconciled, which have such mutual *Antipathies* to each other? How can we *love* him whilst we are so prevalently *averse* to all that is *lovely* and *amiable* in *Him*, and so *unreasonably fond* of every thing that *He hates* and *abhors*? Doubtless while there is such a *Contrariety* between *God* and *us*, it is impossible we should *love* him without *hating* our selves. Hence the *Apostle* tells us, that the *carnal Mind* is not only an *enemy*, but that it is *enmity* it self to *God*, Rom. viii. 7. It is *Spight* and *Rancor* in the *Abstract*, being as repugnant to *His pure* and *holy Nature*, as *Heaven* is to *Hell*, or *Light* to *Darkness*. And the same *Apostle* gives us an *Account* of this *Enmity*, and shews us from whence it doth arise, Col. i. 21. *And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works*: These are the *Make-baits* that infuse into our *Souls* a secret *Enmity* to *God*, by inspiring them with *such Dispositions* as are altogether repugnant to the *Purity* and *Holiness* of his *Nature*; and there is nothing will *extinguish* these *wicked Dispositions*, from

from whence our *Enmity* to God doth arise, but only the *contray Habits* of *Virtue* and true *Goodness*. So that all our *bodily Exercises* in Religion do no otherwise tend to *reconcile* our *Minds* to God, than as they are *instrumental* to destroy the *Body* of *Sin* in us, and to beget in us a *Divine* and *Godlike* nature; which if they do not effect, they will *leave* us at as great a distance from God as ever they *found* us; and after all our *Professions*, and *bodily* *Severities*, our *rapturous Passions* in Religion, and *fluent Strains* of Devotion; after our *Hearing*, and *Praying*, and *Receiving* of *Sacraments*, we shall be found as utter *Enemies* to God as ever we were before: For there is nothing can *reconcile* the *Mind* of a *Man* to God, but only a *thorough Conformity* and *Agreement* in *Nature* with him. And as we cannot be *reconciled* to God without being *Godly*, so neither can God be *reconciled* to us. 'Tis true he bears a hearty *Good-will* to all his *Creation*, and earnestly *desires* the *Welfare* of every *Being* that he hath made capable of any degree of *Happiness*; and there is no *Man* whatsoe'er excluded from this his *universal Benevolence*, which with outstretched Arms embraces the *whole Creation*: But it is impossible he should *love* any, so as to be *pleased* with or *delighted* in them, but only those that are *good*; for tho' his

Love be terminated upon *infinite Objects*, yet it is founded upon *unchangeable Reason*, and that is *true Goodness*, which is the *only Motive of wise and reasonable Love*. Thus he loves Himself, not purely because he is Himself; for that would be rather an *Instinct*, than a *reasonable Love*; but because he is good: and he loves Himself above all other Things, not out of a blind *unreasonable Fondness* to himself, but because he knows Himself to be the *highest and most perfect Good*. And if upon an impossible *Supposition*, he were *less good* than he is, he would doubtless *love himself less* than he doth; but because his *own Essence* is the *fairest Copy*, and *most perfect Idea of Goodness*; therefore if he love *reasonably*, he must love himself *most*; and consequently love all other things *proportionably* as they *approach* and *resemble* Himself in *Goodness*, and *Purity*, and *Holiness*. For if he love himself *best*, because he is *most good*, he must necessarily love all other things *proportionably* as they are *more or less good*; and indeed he could not love Himself *infinitely*, should he love *us* for any *other Reason*, but that for which he loves *Himself*: For he can love Himself no farther than he hath Reason for it; and therefore if he had *other Reasons* to love *us*, beyond what he hath to love *Himself*, he would not love *Himself*

self *infinitely*; because he would not have *infinite Reason* for it. So that it is plain, God loves *Himself* and *us* for the *same* general Reason. And as he doth not love *Himself*, but because he is *good*; so he doth not love *us*, meerly because we are such and such Men, out of a peculiar *Fondness* to our individual Persons; but because we *resemble* Him in that *Goodness* and *Purity* for which he loves *Himself*. For one of these three things we must say, That either God loves us for *no Reason* at all, which would be a degrading of his most *wise* Love into a *foolish Fondness*; or else that he loves us for our *Sins*, which would be to make him love *different Objects*, *Himself* and *us*, upon *contrary Reasons*; or that he loves us for our *Goodness*, and *Conformity* to his own most *pure* and *perfect Nature*. This therefore is that *alone*, that will *reconcile* God to us, and without this all our *bodily Religion* is *insignificant*. Tho' we should profess Religion with the *Constancy* of *Martyrs*, and our whole Lives were a continued *Rapture* of Religious *Passions*; tho' we should fast our selves into Skeletons, and pray till our Knees clave to the ground; tho' we should live upon *Sacraments*, and hear as many *Sermons* as there are hours in the Day; yet if upon *all this* we do not grow more *charitable* and *benevolent*, more *honest* and *tem-*

Persevere, more humble and heavenly minded, it will be all to no purpose; for when all is done, there is nothing but *true Goodness* can indear us to the *good God*. So that it is apparent, that notwithstanding all our *bodily Exercises*, so long as we continue in our *Sins*, there is so vast a *Gulf* between God and us, that neither we can go to *Him*, nor he come to *us*; and, unless God alters *his Nature* by becoming *impure* as we are *impure*, or we alter *ours* by becoming *pure* as *He* is *pure*, so *immense* is the *Distance* between him and us, that it is impossible we should ever *meet* and *agree*. What the Prophet therefore says of *Sacrifice*, may be said of all *bodily Religion*, *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams or ten thousand rivers of Oil?* Will he be reconciled with zealous Professions, fluent Prayers, or melting Passions? no, no; *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do Justice, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*, Micah vi. 7, 8.

2. *Bodily Exercise* profits but little in comparison with *Godliness*, as to the *perfecting* of our *Natures*. 'Tis true, this *bodily Exercise* is *instrumental* of our *Perfection*, so far as it promotes in us the *Virtues* of *Godliness* and *Religion*; if it makes us *meek* and *humble*, and *just*, and *charitable*, and *temperate*;

if

if it inspires us with a *sincere Love to God*, and a *dutiful Awe and Dread of his Majesty*; if it produces in us a hearty *Submission to his Will*, and a constant Dependence upon his *Truth and Goodness*; then indeed it doth *effectually conduce to the Perfection and Accomplishment of our Natures*, it being productive of that wherein the *Perfection of our Natures* doth consist: But if *these* are not the Effects of it, we are never the better for it, and after all our *Hearing, and Praying, and Professing*, our *Nature* will be still as *maim'd and imperfect* as ever it was before. For the *Perfection of a Rational Nature* consists not in *Forms and Outsides*, and such and such *bodily Motions and mechanical Exercises* of our *Sense and Passion*, but in being *wise and good*; in having our *Understandings* informed with the *Principles of right Reason*, and our *Wills and Affections* regulated by them. For to be a *perfect Man*, is to live up to the *highest Principle of Humane Nature*, and that is *Reason*; which is the proper *Character* of our *Beings* that *distinguishes us from all sublunary Natures*, and sets us in a *Form of Being* above them. When therefore we are released from the *Slaveries of Sense and Passion*, and all our *Powers* are perfectly subdued to this *superior Principle*, as to do every *thing* that it *commands*, and nothing that it *forbids*, and

and we choose and refuse, and love and hate, and hope, and fear, and desire, and delight, according as *right Reason* directs and dictates to us; then, and not till then, we are come to the full *Stature* of *perfect Men in Christ Jesus*. Now what else is *Godliness*, but only an *Habit* of living according to the *Laws of Reason*, or an accustoming our selves in all our *Circumstances*, to do those *Things* that are most *fit* and *reasonable*; to demean our selves towards *God*, our *Selves*, and all the *World*, with that *Devotion*, *Sobriety*, and *Justice*, as becomes *Rational Beings* placed in our *Condition* and *Circumstances*? This is *Godliness*; and till we are in some measure arrived to this, our *Faculties* are wholly out of *Joint*, notwithstanding all our *bodily Religion*. For so long as we live in a state of *Sin*, we live in *Rebellion* to our own *Reason*, and the *Natural Polity* of our *Souls* is dissolved into a wild confused *Anarchy*. Our *Reason*, that was made to govern us, is enslaved by its own *Vassals*, and forced to truckle to our *Passions* and *Appetites*. The *Law* in our *Members* controuls the *Law* in our *Minds*, and countermands the *Dictates* of our *purest Reason*; and so our *nature* is turned up-side-down, and the *Cardinal Points* of our *Motion* changed into quite contrary *Positions*. And so far is our *Nature* from being

*perfected*

perfected without Godliness, that it is the most wretched confused thing in the whole World; a mere undistinguished Chaos, where *frigida cum calidis*, Sense and Reason, Brute and Man, are shuffled together in a heap of rude and undigested Ruins: and being in this sick disorderly Condition, what can recover us but only inuring and accustoming our selves to live godlily; or, which is all one, according to the Prescripts of right Reason? This, by degrees, will re-advance our Reason to its native Throne, and reduce our rebellious Passions and Appetites to a pure and Spiritual Mind: This will set our disjointed Faculties in order, and restore our decayed Nature to its primitive Health and Vigour. For by inuring our selves to a Life of Reason, our Passions and Appetites will by degrees be tamed and civiliz'd, so that at length it will be natural and easy to us; and then we shall chearfully go on from one degree of Virtue to another, till all the *Un-evennesses* of our Natures are filed off, and our Souls are polished into living Images of the most perfect God; till we come to that heavenly permanent state of ever knowing and doing that which is best and most reasonable: and this is the utmost Pitch of Perfection that any reasonable Nature can aspire to. So that it is Godliness alone that doth perfect our Natures, and restore us to the

pure

pure state of reasonable Beings. For to be perfectly godly is to be perfectly conformable to the eternal Laws of Reason; and he that is so, is advanced to the utmost Pitch of Perfection that his reasonable Nature is capable of.

3. Bodily Exercise profits but little in comparison with Godliness, as to the entituling us to Heaven and eternal Life: For God hath been so gracious, as not only to assure us that there is a Heaven and future Happiness, but he hath also promised it to us upon certain Terms and Conditions, that so by performing these, we might not only believe that there is a Heaven, but also be inspired with a certain Hope of enjoying it. For upon our performing the Condition upon which Heaven is promised to us, we are vested with such an inalienable Right to it, as we can never be dispossessed of; unless the God of Truth break his Word, which he can never do, until he ceases to be God. This therefore is one great Advantage which Religion doth design us, to beget in us such a lively Hope of that blessed Immorality which it promises to us, as might carry us cheerfully through all the weary Stages of our Duty, and support our Minds under all the Calamities of this present World. And without all doubt, the Hope of Heaven is the greatest Blessing that

that we are capable of on this side Heaven ; for if we had *all* the *World* before us, and *every Pleasure* of it were *distilled* to a *Quintessence* to feast our Desires and entertain our licorice Appetites, what a *poor inconsiderable Trifle* would it be, compared with the *Hope* of being transformed into the *Like-ness* of *God*, and dwelling for ever in His *Presence*, there to spend a *blissful Eternity* with *Saints* and *Angels*, *Arch-angels* and *Seraphims*, in one continued *everlasting Act* of *rapturous Love and Joy*? What *mean* things are all the sickly Joys, the empty, flat, evanid Pleasures *this World* doth afford us, compared with the ravishing Pleasures and divine Contentments that spring from such *vast and mighty Hopes*? This *Hope* of Heaven therefore being so highly advantageous to us, God hath therefore *promised* it to us upon certain *Terms* and *Conditions*, that so we might have a *sure Foundation* to build our *Hope* upon ; that we might know upon what *Grounds* we are to expect that *blessed Reward*, which we could never have done, had God left himself *free* to with-hold or bestow it upon us, according to the *arbitrary*, and, to us, *uncertain* Determinations of his Will, and not bequeathed it to us upon such *Conditions* by his own *irrevocable Promise*. That therefore which gives us a Right to Heaven, and is the only *true Ground*

Ground of our Hopes of it, is our performing the Condition upon which it is promised to us ; and the Condition upon which it is promised to us, is nothing less than *true* and *universal* Godliness. And hence the Apostle tells us, that *without holiness no Man shall see the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14. and our Saviour, in Matth. v. restrains the Beatitudes of the other World to those that are *pure in Spirit*, and *pure in Heart*, that are *benign* and *merciful*, that *hunger and thirst after Righteousness*, and that endure the unjust Persecutions of the World with *Christian Patience*, and *Courage*, and *Constancy*. And the Promise of eternal Life is limited by the Apostle to those who *by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality*, Rom. ii. 7. And if Godliness be the *sole Condition* of eternal Life, then it necessarily follows, that all our *body* Exercises in Religion do no farther conduce to *entitle* us to it, than as they conduce to make us *godly* and *virtuous* ; which if they do not effect, they give us no more *Right* to Heaven, or *Ground* to hope for it, than the most *indifferent* Actions in the World. Hence our Saviour hath told us before hand, that we may know what to trust to, *Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven*, Matth. vii. 21.

vii. 21. that is, not every one that *professes* my Name, and *acknowledges* me for his Lord and Master, and makes solemn *Prayers* and *Addresses* to me, shall be admitted into the Kingdom of Happiness; such *outward bodily Exercises* as these will never entitle any Man unto that blessed Condition: Tho' you should *profess* my Name never so solemnly, and pray to me with never so much Fervor and Earnestness, yet do not think I will be bri'b'd by such Trifles to connive at your *Sins*, and admit you into Heaven notwithstanding all your *Impieties*; no, no; I do assure you before hand, that you may know what to trust to, that there is nothing but your *sincere Submission* unto the Will of my Father, shall ever perswade me to receive you into his *heavenly Kingdom*. Let us not therefore flatter our selves any longer with vain Expectances of Heaven, upon the account of our *bodily Religion*; for unless our Natures are *chang'd*, and our Minds *reformed* and *better'd* by it, we may as well lay *claim* to Heaven because we *eat* and *drink* and *sleep*, as because we *pray*, and *hear*, and *receive* *Sacraments*: For tho' these *bodily Exercises* are profitable *Means* to entitle us to Heaven, yet it is only upon this Account, because they are *Means* to make us *good*; but if they do not effect *this*, they are all but so many *insignificant Cyphers*. He therefore

fore that builds his Hope of Heaven meerly upon *bodily* Religion, builds upon a *sandy Foundation*, which if he finally trust to, will sink under him, and bury him in eternal Ruins.

4. And lastly, *Bodily Exercise* profits but little in comparison with *Godliness*, as to the qualifying us for Heaven; which is a distinct Consideration from the former. For supposing we could have a *Right* to Heaven, without being *disposed* and *qualify'd* for it, it would be no Advantage at all to us; for before we can *enjoy* Heaven, our *Minds* must be *reconciled* to the Pleasures and Delights of it, or else it is impossible they should be *Pleasures* to us. Now in the Temper of every wicked Mind there is a *natural* Antipathy unto all those *pure* and *spiritual* Joys wherewith the *heavenly* State abounds, which being *pure*, and *chaste*, and *refined*, can never agree with the *vitiated* Palate of a *base degenerate* Soul. For what Concord can there be between *spiteful* and *devilish* Spirits, and the Fountain of all *Love* and *Goodness*? between *sensual* and *carnalized* Souls that understand no other Pleasures but only those of the *Flesh*, and those *pure* and *virgin* Spirits that never eat nor drink, but live for ever upon *Wisdom*, and *Holiness*, and *Love*, and *Contemplation*? How could I be happy in *seeing* that God, whom I cannot love;

love; in conversing with these Spirits, whose Genius and Temper I abhor; and in being for ever employed in those heavenly *Exercises*, to which I have the greatest Aversion; no, no; till I am of the same *Disposition* with those celestial Inhabitants, and my *Mind* is contempered to the heavenly State, it is impossible that *Heaven* and *I* should ever agree; and I may as well see without Eyes, or hear without Ears, as *enjoy* Heaven without a Heavenly *Disposition*. For as to the main, we shall be of the same Temper of *Mind* when we come into the other World, as we are of while we continue in *this*, it being unimaginable how our *Disposition* should be totally *changed* meerly by passing out of one World into another; and therefore as in *this* World it is *Likeness* that doth *congregate* and *associate* Beings together, so doubtless it is in the other *too*: so that if we carry thither with us our wicked devilish *Dispositions*, (as we shall doubtless do, unless we subdue and mortify them here) there will be no *Company* fit for us to *associate* with, but only the Devils, and damned Ghoits of wicked Men; with whom our wretched Spirits being *already* joined by a *Likeness* of Nature, will be forced to *congregate*, as soon as ever they are excommunicated from the Society of Mortals. For whither should they flock but to the Birds

of their own Feather? Where should they join *Society*, but with those malignant Spirits to whom they are joined already by a *Community of Natures*? For supposing that when they are landed in Eternity, it were left to their own *Liberty* to go either to Heaven or Hell; yet Heaven would be no Place for them, the Air of that bright Empire of *eternal Day* would never agree with their *black* and *hellish* Natures; for alas! what should they do among those blessed Souls that inhabit it, to whose *Godlike Natures*, *divine Conversations*, and *heavenly Employments*, they have the greatest *Repugnancy* and *Aversion*? From hence therefore it is apparent, that to our *comfortable Possession* of Heaven it is not only necessary we should have a *Right* to it, but also that we should be *prepared* and *qualified* for it; and as to this, all our *bodily Exercises* in Religion are no farther profitable than as they are *effe-ctual Means* of true substantial *Godliness*. For when the *Soul* goes out of this *Body*, it must leave all this *bodily Religion* behind it, and carry nothing with it into Eternity, but only those divine *Virtues* and heavenly *Dispo-sitions*, which by the Means of this *bodily Religion* it did here acquire. For our *outward Professions* and *bodily Severities* and *Passions*, our *praying*, and *hearing*, and *receiving* of *Sacraments*, are all but *Scaffolds*

to this heavenly Building of *inward Purity* and *Goodness*; and when once this is finished for *Eternity*, then must these *Scaffolds* go down as *Things* of no farther *Use* or *Necessity*. But as for the *Graces* of the *Mind* they shall stand for ever as the only *fit* *Habitations* of the *heavenly Pleasures*; and therefore 'tis impossible that these our *bodily Exercises* should formally dispose our *Souls* for *Heaven*, since in *Heaven* they shall wholly *cease*. For altho' our *Love* and *Joy*, and all our *sweeter Affections*, shall there be kept in everlasting *Exercise*; yet shall they be wholly *refined* from all *bodily Passion*, because there we shall be stript into *naked* and *unbodied Spirits*, Our *Love* shall unite our *Wills* to *God* and the whole *Choir* of *blessed Spirits*, without any *warmth* of *Spirit*, or *Expansions* of *Heart*. Our *Joy* being purely the *Jubilee* of our *Minds* and the *Recreation* of our *Reason*, shall flow without *Shouts* or *Noises* in a most *sweet* but *silent* *Current*; and the whole *Scene* of our *Happiness* shall be transacted on the *Stage* of our *Reason*. There being therefore no room for *bodily Exercise* in this *heavenly State*, it is impossible we should be *qualified* by it for the *Enjoyment* of *Heaven*; but doubtless, our *Fitness* for *Heaven* must consist in such *inherent Qualities* of *Mind* as *separate Souls* may carry to *Heaven* with them; and what

these are, may be easily concluded by considering what the *Employment* of Heaven is ; which, so far as we are given to understand of it, consists in *contemplating* and *adoring* the Divinity, and in *conversing* with those pure and blessed Spirits that dwell for ever in his Presence. Now to make us fit for such an *Employment*, the *only necessary* Qualities of Mind are an universal *Love*, and a profound *Humility*, which two are the *fundamental* Virtues of of Religion, of which all the other Virtues are so many different *Operations*. 'Tis true, our *Love* and *Humility* will not have all the *same* Operations in the *other* World as they have in *this*, because there we shall not have the *same* Occasions for them ; for being placed above all *Sufferings* in the Enjoyment of the most *perfect* Good, we shall have no occasion either for the *passive* Vertues of *Patience*, and *Meekness*, and *Forgiveness* of Injuries ; nor yet for those *active* Vertues which speak us distant from our Happiness, such as *Faith* and *Hope*, which shall be swallow'd up in *Vision* and *Fruition*. But tho' in that *blessed* State we shall have no occasion to express our *Love* and *Humility* in such Acts as these, yet without these two great Vertues we shall be no ways *capable* of the *heavenly* Employment ; for what Pleasure can we take in *contemplating* the Being of God, if we do not

*love*

*love* Him? Doubtless our own *Antipathy* to the *Goodness* and *Purity* of His *Nature* will either avert our Eyes from *beholding* him, or render the Sight of him *horrible* and *dreadful* to us. And if we do not *contemplate* him with an *humble*, and *lowly* Mind, the *Sight* of his *supereminent* *Perfections* will either provoke our *Envy* or *Contempt*, make us *pine* to see our selves out-shone by him, or *contemn* his *Glories* out of an *overweening* *Opinion* of our own. Again, if we do not *love* God, we cannot *adore* him with a *free* and *cheerful* Mind; and if we are *proud* and *self-conceited*, instead of God we shall adore our *Selves*, and become our own *Idols* and *Votaries*. So that without *Humility* and *Love* we shall be no ways fit for the other part of that sweet Employment which consists in *conversing* with *holy* and *blessed* *Spirits*; for *their* *Conversation* being wholly regulated by the sacred *Laws* of *wise* and *holy* *Friendship*, and consisting in an everlasting *Intercourse* of *chaste* and *mutual* *Indearments*; no Soul can be *capable* of bearing a *Part* in it that is not inspired with universal *Love* and great *Humility*; both which are *indispensably* necessary to every *wise* and *friendly* *Conversation*: For where *Humility* is wanting, every *Trifle* will *offend*; and where *Charity* is wanting, every *Offence* will *kindle* an *unquenchable* *Discord*. So that a

*proud malicious* Nature can converse no where with Satisfaction, much less with those blessed Souls, in whose most *pure* and *perfect* Friendship there is not the least Intermixture either of *Flattery* or *Envy*; for being all perfectly *good*, and perfectly *happy*, they can neither *over-value* themselves, nor *envy* what another enjoys; so that in all their Conversation there is no Entertainment either for *Pride* or *Malice*, but on the contrary there is nothing but what is *distasteful* to them: for where there are none that *over-value* either themselves or others, but every one loves every one with a *sincere* and *inviolable* Friendship, there can be no Conversation but what is *distasteful* to an *arrogant* and *malicious* Temper. What then should a *proud malignant* Spirit do among those *happy* Beings, a great part of whose Heaven consists in *rejoicing* in each others Happiness? Doubtless could such a Spirit be admitted into their Society, their Bliss would so *enrage* its *Envy*, their Perfection so *upbraid* its Baseness, that it would find nothing but Causes of *Discontent* in a Conversation so *disagreeable* to its Nature: so that without universal *Love* and profound *Humility*, there is nothing in Heaven that we can *enjoy*; there being no *Employment* in that blessed State that is *agreeable* to the Genius of a *proud* and *malicious* Mind. So that unless our

our *bodily* Religion doth make us *really good* by begetting in us those heavenly Virtues of *Humility* and *Love*, it is altogether *impertinent* as to the disposing of us for Heaven; and after all our *fasting*, and *praying*, and *bearing*, and *receiving* of Sacraments, we shall be found as remote from Heaven, and as unprepared for it, as if we had spent our time in gathering Cockles, or telling the Sands upon the Sea-shore. So that tho' this *bodily* Exercise be highly *useful* and *necessary* to our Reformation and Amendment, and is in it self a *very conducive Means* to *internal Holiness* and *Goodness*; yet compared with *Godliness* it self, wherein our *Holiness* and *Goodness* doth consist, it is of very *little Account*, either as to the *reconciling* us to God, or the *perfecting* our Natures, or to the *entitling* us to Heaven, or *qualifying* us for it.

Now from hence we may learn, what the *true End* is of *external* and *bodily* Religion: It is not required for its *own sake* without any farther End or Intention, but for the sake of *Godliness*, which is the *ultimate Mark* at which it ought to be levelled and directed. And therefore as he that would build an House must make use of the *Means*, the *Tools* and *Materials* of Building; but if he think to build the House *meerly* by using

these Means, by cutting the Wood and carving in Stone, without any farther Aim or Intention, he will find himself extreamly mistaken: so he that would be *godly* must use the *Means* of Godliness; he must *profess* the true Religion, and *pray*, and *hear*, and *receive* Sacraments; but he that thinks he is *godly* meerly because he uses these *Means*, tho' he doth not at all concern himself to direct them unto the great *End* for which they were designed, doth but *deceive* and *abuse* his own Soul. For, for God's sake, what doth it signify for a Man to *pray* in his Family, and afterwards to go and *cheat* in his Shop? to keep the Lord's Day strictly, and play the Knave all the Week after? What doth it avail for a Man to *bear* the Word of God, if he make no Conscience of *obeying* it? to receive the Sacrament of *Charity*, if he still retain *Hatred* and *Ill-will* to his Neighbours? Do we think that God is so fond of these *instrumental* Duties of Religion, as for *their* sakes to dispense with these *gross* and *fulsome* Immoralities? No, no; these are things only fit to cheat Children and Fools withal. But let us not imagine, that the *wise* and *holy* God will be so imposed upon; that when he hath ordained these *Duties* only as the *Means* of acquiring that univerfal *Purity* and *Goodness* which he principally *intends* and *requires*, he will be

con-

contented *barely* with your using these *Means*, whether the great Ends for which he designed them be ever obtained by you or no. If you should enjoin your Servant to copy out such a Letter or Manuscript, and for that End should require him to use Pen, Ink, and Paper ; would you not think him extreamly absurd or insolent, should he come and shew you a large insignificant Scribble, and tell you that according to your Command he had used the Pen, Ink, and Paper, tho' indeed he had not transcribed one Word with them of what you did command and enjoin him? And yet thus *rude*ly and *insolently* do you deal by God, who place *all* your Religion in the *instrumental* Duties of it. God doth require of you that you should copy out his *Justice*, *Purity*, and *Goodness*, and transcribe them into your *own* Natures ; and in order to your doing of this, he hath prescribed you certain *Means* and *Instruments*, such as *Prayer*, and *Hearing*, and *receiving* of *Sacraments* ; and when you come to give him an account of that mighty Task he hath enjoined you, you shew him an insignificant *Flourish* of Religion, and have nothing to say for your selves but that according to his Appointment you have *prayed*, and *heard*, and *received* *Sacraments* ; but you must confess that with all these you have not transcribed one *Tittle* or *Iota* of that

*Purity*

*Purity* and *Holiness* which he required at your hands. Is this a *proper* account, do you think, to be given to the *wise* and *holy* Sovereign of the World? Would you be thus mocked by your own Servants? And dare you presume thus to mock the great God, between *whom* and *you* there is infinitely a greater distance than between *you* and the *meanest* Vassal about you? In the Name of God, for what End do you pray? Is it to *please* him with a fine Speech, or an humble and eloquent Address? Or is it to *perswade* him by your fawning Submissions to befriend you in all your Wickedness and Rebellion against him? If either of these be your Aims, I must plainly tell you, you were as good save your Breath for some other purpose; but if you pray to him upon a *sincere* Design, to affect your Minds with an *awful Sense* of God, and to obtain of him *Grace* to enable you to repent and amend, and for *Pardon* and *Mercy* upon your unfeigned Repentance; then your *Prayer* must necessarily make you more *meek*, and *humble*, and *industrious* to please him by a *free* and *generous* Obedience. To what purpose do you come to *hear* the Word of God? Do you think it gratifies the Almighty that you will please to give him the *Hearing*? Or that you meet in the publick Assemblies to furnish your Heads with *Notions* and

and your Tongues with *Discourse*? If this be your Opinion, I must needs tell you, you have very *mean* Apprehensions of God, to think him a Being capable to be pleased with such a *mean* and *inconsiderable* Trifle: but, if you come with *humble*, *honest*, and *teachable* Minds to *learn* the Will of God in order to your *obeying* it, your *hearing* will necessarily lead you to the *practice* of all those excellent Virtues which God requires at your hands. What do you design when you *receive* the Sacrament? is it to please God with offering *Vows* to him, which you do not mean to *perform*, to pacify him with a short *Pang* of *religious Passion*, with shedding a few *Tears* over your bleeding Saviour; or to get your *Pardon* sealed with the Blood of the Covenant without *Repentance* and *Reformation*? If so, I must needs tell you, you *receive* the Sacrament to no other purpose, but only to *deceive* and *abuse* your own Souls. But if you come with an *honest* Design to *remember* the great things that your Saviour hath done for you; to *excite* your Love to him with the Spectacle of his *Passion*, and to *renew* your Communion with the Saints, and your *Vows* of *Obedience* unto God; you will then infallibly be made *better* by it, and be more and more accomplish'd in every part of *true* and *real* Goodness. So that unless we perform this *outward* and

and *bodily* Religion to the Purposes of true Godliness, we perform it to no purpose at all. Let me therefore beseech you, even for God's sake and your own Souls, do not rest in this *bodily* Religion, think not that you have done *enough*, when you have *fasted* and *prayed*, *heard* and *received* Sacraments; for if you do, you are short of your *Duty*, and will infallibly fall short of the *Reward* of it. These Things indeed we must by no means *neglect*, they being the necessary *Means* and *Instruments* of our Reformation; but if we do not use them as *such*, we take a great deal of Pains to no purpose; if they do not render us more *humble* and *charitable*, more *sober* and *heavenly-minded*, we have spent all our Labour in vain, and in the End shall have no other *Reward* for it but the Portion of *Hypocrites* in the Lake of Fire and Brimstone.

## EZEKIEL XVIII. 30.

*Repent and turn your selves from all your  
Transgressions, so Iniquity shall not be  
your Ruin.*

**T**HE great Design of this Chapter is to answer an Objection which the Jews were wont to make against the *Righteousness* of God's Procedure with them; *viz.* That he punished them not only for their *own*, but for their *Fathers* Sins. Which Objection, tho' it did not at all impeach the *Righteousness* of God, it being no Injustice in Him to inflict temporal Evils upon the *Children* for their *Fathers* Sins; yet that they might urge it no more as a Pretence of Gods *unrighteous* dealing with them, God assures them by his Prophet that from thenceforth he would *remit* that Right he had to make them smart for their *Fathers* Iniquities, and inflict no other Punishment upon them than what was due for their own *personal* Faults; that if they did well, they should *fare well*, notwithstanding the Sins of their *Parents*; and that if they did *wickedly*, they should surely smart for it, how well soever their *Parents* behaved themselves. Nay, says he, your

*Fathers*

*Fathers Merit or Demerit* shall henceforth be so far from excusing you *from*, or exposing you *to* Punishment, that you shall not suffer for your own past *Wickedness*, if you *repent* of it, nor yet escape for your past *Righteousness* if you *revolt* from it. This is the Sum of the whole *Chapter* to the 24th *Verse*: and yet, says he, *the house of Israel says, the way of the Lord is not equal.* *O house of Israel are not my ways equal?* *Are not your ways unequal?* Can any method of rewarding and punishing be more equal than this which I now propose? or can any Accusation be more *injurious* than this of yours against me? but know, 'tis not your *unjust* reproaches shall make me desist from this my most *righteous* procedure. *Therefore, says he Verse the 30th. I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways;* how much soever you reproach and calumniate me, I will strictly insist upon this method of rewarding and punishing you according as you repent of, or persevere in your Iniquities; and to let you see that I will be as ready to reward you upon the *former*, as to *punish* you upon the *latter*; do but for once make a tryal of me, *repent and turn your selves from all your transgressions*, and you shall surely find that *your past iniquity shall not be your ruin.* The sense of which Words resolves into two Propositions:

i. That

1. That the *Iniquity* of any People or Nation tends directly to their *Ruine*.
2. That true *Repentance* and *Amendment* is the certain way to prevent the *Ruine* which *Iniquity* tends to.

I begin with the first, that the *Iniquity* of any People or Nation tends directly to their *Ruine*: *So it shall not* ---- intimating that if they did not *repent* their *Iniquity* would certainly end in their *Ruine*. And of the *Truth* of this the constant Experience of all *Ages* is a sufficient *Testimony*; for if you consult either sacred or profane *History*, you will find that *Iniquity*, like the *Worm* at the root of *Jonah's* *gourd*, hath many times blasted the most flourishing *Kingdoms*, pulled down their *Banks*, and laid them open to such *Inundations* of *Misery*, as have finally *overwhelm'd* and *destroy'd* them. And those that have made the strictest Enquiries into humane Affairs have constantly observed that the *Rise* and *Fall* of Nations hath been more owing to their *Virtue* and *Vice* than to any other Cause, and that upon these two Hinges generally the Fates of *Empires* turn; that the Foundations of their *Rise* were laid in *virtuous*, *brave*, and *generous* Actions, and that by *Wickedness* and *Corruption* of Manners they were *undermined*, and sunk into a *final Ruine*. But the *Truth* of this will yet more fully appear by considering

ing how many ways *Vice* doth contribute to the *Ruine* and *Destruction* of a Kingdom; all which I shall reduce to these eight Heads:

1. It doth it by depriving Kingdoms and Nations of the *Favour* and *Protection* of God.
2. By inflicting positive *Plagues* and *Punishments* upon them.
3. By corrupting and infatuating their *Counsels*.
4. By melting and emasculating their *Courage*.
5. By breaking and disturbing their *Order*.
6. By dissolving their *Unity* and *Concord*.
7. By consuming their *Wealth* and *Substance*,
8. By debasing their *Esteem* and *Reputation*.

1. *Wickedness* directly tends to the *Ruine* of Kingdoms and Nations, as it deprives them of the *Divine Favour* and *Protection*. For if we acknowledge God to be the *Almighty Lord* and *Sovereign* of the World, we cannot but confess that the *Strength* and *Establishment* of Kingdoms is founded in *His Favour* and *Protection*; that his *Goodness*, *Wisdom*, and *Power* are the Pillars upon which those vast and mighty *Structures* lean;

and

and consequently that if he withdraw from them those necessary Supports, they cannot stand, but must inevitably sink under their own weight into irreparable *Ruines*. For *nothing* can subsist without God, and much less *Kingdoms* and *Nations* which have so many principles of Corruption lurking within their own Bowels, and in which there are compounded so many *boisterous Passions, repugnant Humors, inconsistent Designs and contesting Interests*; all which like the contrary *Qualities* of our Bodies do by their mutual *jarring* with one another continually tend to the Dissolution of the whole. So that did not the *wise* and Almighty Providence of God continually superintend these *contrary Principles*, and by its *skilful mingling* them with one another, preserve them in a *just* and *due Temper*, those great and unwieldy Bodies in which they do reside, would be every moment in danger of being *diseased, corrupted and destroyed* by them. But now the *Sins* of Nations do mightily contribute to the *depriving* them of this *Benefit* of God's Providence and Protection; for how can any Kingdom or Nation expect that God will continue to protect them in their *Rebellions* against Himself? that he who is so *implacable* an *Enemy* of *wickedness* and so *zealous* an *Assertor* of his own *Honour* and *Authority*, will employ his Power to

patronize them in the *one*, and take their part against the *other* : and if he *withdraw* his upholding Providence from a Nation, he needs do *no more* ; for now it *must* sink of its own accord, and like a *falling House*, when its prop is removed, its Weight will bear it down and quickly crush it into *Ruines*.

2. *Wickedness* tends to the *Ruine* of Kingdoms and Nations not only by engaging God to *withdraw* his protection from, but also to *inflict* positive *Plagues* and *Punishments* upon them. For God being the supreme *Sovereign* of the World, and especially of this World of *Men* who are so extremely *prone* to contemn and violate the Laws of his *Government*, it is necessary that since our *Hopes* and *Fears* are the master-springs of all our Motions, he should take especial Care, as on the one hand to *allure* us to our Duty by the *Hope of Reward*, so on the other to *awe* us into it by the *Fear of Punishment* ; and if he should not, there would be no confining such extravagant Creatures, as we are, within any Rule or Compafs. Now as for *particular* Offenders, the great Scene of God's *Rewarding* and *Punishing* them is the *future State*, where every Man must answer for himself and receive the just Retributions of his own *Actions* ; but as for *sinful* and *virtuous Nations*,  
they

they are capable only of being rewarded and punished in *this Life*; there being no such thing as *particular Nations* and *Kingdoms* in the *Life to come*; where *Heaven* and *Hell* are the two *Nations* into which the *Spirits of Men* are distributed; so that if wicked *Nations* were not punished *here* as such, they could never be punished at all. And if there were no such *Punishments* set up like *Banks* and *Shores* to break the *Insolence* and check the overflowing *Wickedness* of *Sinners*, the whole *World* would soon become a *Sink* and *Deluge* of *Iniquity*: and therefore tho' here God many times spares *particular Offenders*, there being a *future State* in which he can reckon with them and call them to a strict account for all their *Affronts* and *Provocations*; yet 'tis very rare, if ever, that he suffers wicked *Nations* to go unpunished here; because if he should, as such they would escape for ever. And how would it *weaken* the *Government* of the *World*, if when God sees a *People confederate* against him, blow the *Trumpets* of *Rebellion* and gather into *Armies* to urge *War* against him, he shou'd sit still with his hands in his bosom and take no notice of it? for tho' among *Men* the *Multitude of Offenders* be many times the *Cause* of their *Impunity*, because of the *Weakness of Humane Governments* which are glad to spare, where

they are not strong enough to *punish* ; yet in the Government of God things are quite otherwise : no Combination of Sinners is too hard for *Him*, and the greater and more *numerous* the *Offenders* are, the more his *Justice* is concerned to vindicate the *Affront*. However therefore God may pass by single Sinners in this World, yet when a *Nation* combines against him, *when hand joins in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished*.

3. *Wickedness* tends to the *Ruine* of Kingdoms and Nations as it contributes to the corrupting and infatuating of their *Councils*. For *Vice* and *Wickedness* doth very much depress the Minds, and weaken the *Understandings* of Men ; it doth so *warp* their *Judgments*, and cast such mists of *Prejudice* around their *Reason*, that they are not able to discern the *Issues* and *Consequents* of things ; for when they are overpowered by their *Lusts*, their *Affections* will *mislead* their *Minds*, and impose upon them for *Truth* and *Realities* their own unreasonable *Wishes* and *Desires* : And when we *advise* in the midst of a Company of head-strong *Passions* and *Appetites*, we are like *Rehoboam* amongst his young and *hair-brain'd* *Counsellors*, who represented things to him not as they were in themselves, but according to *his own* *Desires* and *Inclinations*. And when the *Councils* of a *Nation* are steered by its own *vicious* *Affections*,

fections, that will most commonly seem best which is most unreasonable, and so *Storms* will many times be mistaken for *Calms*, and *Rocks* for safe and quiet *Harbours*. No Man is fit to counsel for a *publick Good* but he that is led by *simple* and *unbiased Reason*, because he only will attend *impartially* to the Reasons of things, and *accommodate* his *Advices* to the *publick Necessities* and *Exigencies* of Affairs; but when the Man himself is governed by any unreasonable *Appetite* or *Affection*, that will ever and anon *intermingle* with this Judgment and *bias* his counsels towards its own unreasonable Desires and Inclinations. And when such blind Affections as *Pride* and *Ambition*, *Covetousness* and *Revenge* sit at the stern, and are the *Pilots* and *Steer-men* of a Kingdom; how can it be expected but that in the midst of so many *Rocks* and *Quick-sands* that surround it, it should run a ground, or be split in pieces?

4. *Wickedness* tends to the *Ruine* of Kingdoms and Nations as it contributes to *melt* and *emasculate* their *Courage*. For tho' it cannot be denied, but that the *Valour* and *Courage* of Nations is very much owing to the temper of the *Climes* in which they are situated, yet 'tis evident that as *People* of the most effeminate *Claims* have by *Virtue* been improved into *heroick* and *magnanimous*, as the

*Romans* and *Persians* for instance ; so those of the most *hardy* and *courageous Climes* have many times by their *dissolute* Manners been broken and dispirited into the most wretched *Cowards* and *Poultrons* ; as the *English* for instance, who tho' they have been ever remarked for a *People* of a *daring* and *undaunted Genius*, yet have sometimes been so melted by their own *Softness* and *Luxury*, as that they became Preys to every *Dog* that hunted them. And indeed *Softness*, *Luxury*, and *Wantonnes*, are Vices that will effeminate the Spirits and spoil the strain of the most *valorous Nation* ; for as Virtues are increased by Exercise, so they shrink and decay by Inactivity, and there is no State of Life that doth so *fetter* our Courage and *restrain* its Vigour and Activity, as that of *Idleness* and *Luxury* ; in which after it hath stewed and dissolved a while it will convert into the greatest *Baseness* and *Pusillanimity* : for an *intemperate* Bowl, a Bed of *Sloth* and a *Dalilah*'s Lap are Charms sufficient to *effeminate* a *Heroe*, and bewitch a *Lyon* into a *timorous Hare*. And as these particular *Vices* do naturally discourage a Nation, so Vice in general hath the same Effect ; for it naturally impresses a sense of *Guilt* upon the Mind, which fills it with such *Fears* and *Horrors* as cannot but *weaken* and *dispirit* the *hardiest* and *most daring* *Courage*.

rage. For how can a Man be *courageous* that is continually stung with the Remorses, and haunted with the restless *Furies* of his own guilty Mind ; that carries a *Hell* within his own Bosom, and hath a thousand Guilts, like so many grim and ghastly Devils, continually staring him in the Face ? Certainly such an One must either lay-by his *Reason* or his *Courage*, and become a *Coward* or cease to be a Man. Hence it is said, *The wicked fleeth when no man pursueth, but the righteous is bold as a Lyon*, Prov. 28. 1. And when a Nation is thus dispirited by their own *Lusts* and *Guilts*, then are they ripe for *Ruine*, and fit to be made a prey for every *Nimrod* that will hunt and invade them.

5. *Wickedness* tends to the *Ruine* of Kingdoms and Nations, as it breaks and dissolves their *Union*. For as true *Religion* knits mens Hearts together by the indissoluble *Ligaments* of mutual *Love* and *Charity*, as it heals their *Spirits*, and corrects their *Passions*, and inspires their *Natures* with all those obliging *Graces* upon which the *Peace* and *Concord* of Society is founded ; so on the contrary, *Vice* and *Wickedness* rends and divides the hearts of men, sows seeds of *Discord* in their *Natures*, frets and inflames their *Spirits* against one another, and impregnates them with such *rude* and *barbarous* *Passions* as do naturally render them *unsociable* to

each other ; such as are *Pride and Ambition*, *Envie and Malice*, *Covetousness and Revenge*, which naturally tend to the *Dissolution of Society*, and the cutting in funder all the cords of *Friendship* and good *Neighbourhood*. Hence is that of St. James, Chap. iv. 1. *From hence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members.* Yea doubtless this is the Cause of all those *Discords* that spoil the Harmony of this *Moral World*, the *Pandora's Box* out of which have swarmed all those *Strifes and Contentions*, *Broils*, and *Confusions* that have *destroyed and ruined* many flourishing Kingdoms. For tho' the most turbulent *Factions* are usually faced with *zeal for God*, yet if you look beyond the *Outside*, you will always find that most of the *Broils* that have been conducted under the display'd Banners of *Religion* have been raised and led on by the *Devilish Passions* of those who have been the most zealous *Sticklers* for and *Fomenters* of them. Thus *Vice*, you see, doth naturally divide a Nation ; and teares the Members of it in funder ; and our *Saviour* assures us that when a *Kingdom is divided against it self*, it is soon brought to *desolation*, Matthew xii. 25. For those *Divisions* do mightily impair the *strength* of a *Kingdom*, which like an impetuous Stream being parted into several

veral *Currents* runs with far less force, and is much more easily forded. And when once a Nation is torn and separated into *Factions*, it is at best but like a *Confederate Army*, which tho' it be united into one Body hath several *contrary Interests* and *Designs* which divides their counsels and makes them *suspicious* of one another, and so less able to withstand the force of an *united Enemy*; and in these circumstances what can be expected but that either they should fall out among themselves and sheath their swords in one anothers Bowels, or be made an easie prey to the power and rapine of their common *Adversary*?

6. *Wickedness* tends to the *Ruine* of Kingdoms and Nations, as it disturbs them in their *Order* and regular *Administration*. For as *Religion* lays the Foundations of all good *Order* in a Kingdom, as it obliges the *Governours* to all those regular Virtues that make them publick Blessings, to *Justice*, and *Liberality*, to *Truth* and *Mercy*, to *Constancy* and *Magnanimity*; as it blinds the subordinate *Instruments* and *Ministers* of *State* to *Fidelity* and *Diligence* as it ingages the Subjects to honour and reverence, to obey and submit to their *Governours*; so on the contrary, *Vice* and *Wickedness* when it hath insinuated it self into a *Nation*, *subverts* the whole *Order* of it, and miserably confounds the *Course* of its

its *Administration*: it introduces into the *Government* *Opposition* and *Tyranny*; *Fraud* and *Cruelty*, *Cowardize* and *Inconstancy*; it perverts the *Ministers* of it into *Traytors* and *Robbers*, and turns its *Courts of Justice* into dens of *Thieves*; it alienates the *Subjects* from their *Duty* and *Allegiance*, makes them *heady* and *high-minded*, *rude* and *pragmatical*, *factious* and *ungovernable*; and in a word, spreads such a *poisonous Contagion* over all the vital Parts of a Nation, as, without a speedy *Cure*, must necessarily end in the *Ruine* and *Desolation* of the whole. For such universal *Disorders* are as the *Symptoms* of *Death* upon a Nation, and like those *gentler Convulsions* within the *Bowels* of the *Earth* do portend the *Approach* of some dreadful *Earthquake*. And as when the whole mass of *Blood* and *Humors* is corrupted, the *Body* is sick unto *Death*, and will putrefy apace into a *Carkass*; thus when a *Kingdom* is thus *universally disordered*, when as the *Prophet* *expresses* it, *the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint*, when from the *crown* of the *head* to the *sole* of the *foot* there is no *Soundness* in it, but all is covered with *wounds* and *bruises* and *putrefying sores*; what can be expected but a *speedy* and a *fatal Period*?

7. *Wickedness* tends to the *Ruine* of *Kingdoms* and *Nations*, as it consumes their *Wealth* and *Substance*. Whilst *Virtue* and *Religion*.

Religion do bear sway in a Nation ; to be sure it is of a *frugal* and *industrious Genius*, the *People* will attend to their *own* *Business* and not be *intermeddling* pragmatically in another's *Dioceſs* ; They will enjoy themselves within the *Bounds* of *Modesty* and *Sobriety*, and make a *conscience* of *out-spending* their *Fortunes*, and living above their proper *Ranks* and *Degrees* in the *World*. And whilst every *Member* thus acts within its *proper Sphere*, the *Nation* cannot but *thrive* and *prosper*, each one by his honest *Frugality* and *Industry* being enabled upon all occasions to contribute to the *Defence* and *Support* of the *Publick*. But when once *Vice* and *Wickedness* have thrust out *Virtue* and overspread the *Nation*, it introduces in its room so many *costly*, *chargeable*, and *prodigal Lusts*, as will soon *exhaust* its *Wealth*, and suck the *Blood* out of its *Veins*. Then in comes *Idleness*, and like a *Drone* lives upon the *acquests* of *Industry* : Then *Pride* begins to spread her *Peacock's* *train*, and flaunt out what *Frugality* had saved, in *gorgeous Apparel* and *sumptuous Furniture*. Then *Drunkenness* and *Gluttony* begin to call out for *Meat* and *Drink* offerings to their *God*, *the Belly* ; and *Lust* and *Wantonness* to crave *Provisions* to feed and pamper their *infatiate Appetites* : in a word, then comes in such a *Pack* of *greedy Hell-hounds* to devour the *Fruits* of our

our past *Frugality* and *Industry*, as are sufficient to drain and exhaust the *Indies*. And when there are so many *Locusts* swarming in every corner of the *Land*, what can be expected but that at last they should eat up every *green* Thing, and devour the *Fruits* of every *Tree*? For we may maintain whole *Fleets* and *Armies* at a cheaper rate than a few extravagant *Lusts*, and let but *Pride* and *Idleness*, *Intemperance* and *Wantonness* be let loose, and allowed to sponge a while upon a Nation, and in a little time they shall more *impoverish* and *consume* its *Substance*, than a long and wasting *War*. And when the *Wealth* of a Nation which is the *vital Blood* that runs and circulates about its *Veins* and *Arteries*, is thus continually suck-ed by these infatiate *Daughters of the Horse-leech* that still cry out *Give, Give*; its *Life* must necessarily ebb by degrees, and at the last it must faint away and expire.

8. And lastly, *Wickedness* tends to the *Ruine* of Kingdoms and Nations, as it impairs and debases their *Esteem* and *Reputation*. *Righteousness exalteth a Nation*, saith the *Wise Man*, but *Sin is the reproach of any people*, Prov. xiv. 34. for *Vice* hath such a natural *Baseness* and *Uncomeliness* in it, that whenever it appears in its own *Colours*, it creates a mighty *Disesteem* of it self in the *Minds* of all that behold it, and where-ever

ever it goes, it carries an *infamous* Character along with it; it *blasts* the Reputation of its own Votaries, covers their Heads with *Shame and Dishonour*, causes them to *rot* above Ground, and to *stink* alive, and when they are *dead*, writes a *black* and *inglorious* Memory on their Graves. When therefore this *foul* and *noisome* Leprosy hath spread it self over the Face of a *Nation*, it must necessarily render it a *horrid* and *monstrous* Spectacle unto all that behold it; and tho' the *Universality* of Sin may give it some Reputation where its *Throne* and *Empire* is seated, and render it *genteel* and *fashionable* among its own *Slaves* and *Vassals*; yet 'tis such a Reputation as hath no bottom to support it. For unless my *Honour* be founded in some *real Excellency*, it is not in *me*, but in the *Conceit* of him that honours *me*; his *Fancy* is the *Mint* where all my Reputation is coined, and 'tis at his pleasure to stamp me an *Angel* or a *Devil*. So that tho' *Vice* may sometimes be in *Vogue* where it is universally spread and propagated, yet it being a *Vogue* without Foundation, all the Credit it gives is only a *fantastick* Being, a thing that is only the *Sport* and *Dalliance* of *vulgar* Breath and *popular* Noise; but whilst its own *blind* Votaries sing *Hosanna*'s to it, and strew its way with Palms, all the World besides exclaim against and cry unanimously *Cru-*  
*cify*

cify it, Crucify it. So that while it is honored at home, it is vilified abroad, and tho' we may be sometimes so besotted as to reckon it our *Glory*, yet to be sure all wise and indifferent *Judges* will upbraid it to us as our *Shame*. For what wicked Nation is there that hath ever escaped the *Reproaches* and *Infamy* of Mankind, that hath abandoned it self to *Fraud* and *Treachery*, to *Softness* and *Effeminacy*, to *Oppression* and *Cruelty*; and hath not thereupon drawn upon it self the *Scorn* and *Hissing* of all the Nations round about it? And when a *People* are grown *cheap* and *despicable* in their Neighbours eyes, when their *Faith* is suspected, their *Truth* branded, and their *Virtue* stained and blemished, what *Support* or friendly *Intercourse* can they expect from them? Who will *trust* to their *Leagues* or *Confederacies*, or enter into *Commerce* with them, who have neither *Truth* and *Justice* to secure them? for so much *Reputation* as a *Nation* loses, so much *Strength* it loses; for 'tis a mighty *Strength* to a *People* to be feared and lov'd by their neighbouring Nations, neither of which they can expect to be when once they have sunk their *Reputation*; for who will dread an *effeminate* *People* softned with *Luxury* and *Voluptuousness*? or who will love a *profligate* *People* distained with *Cruelty* and *Falshood*? And when a *People* hath not

Cre-

Credit enough to make them either *fear'd* or *lov'd*, if then they are not *ruin'd* and *destroy'd*, it is because their *Enemies* either think it not worth the *while*, or are not at *leisure* to attempt it.

And thus you see, how many ways *Wickedness* contributes to the *Ruine* of a *Nation*. So that when *Wickedness* hath overspread a People, and is become their *Epidemical* disease, it doth not only bode their approaching fate, but hastens it, and pulls it headlong down upon them; and without a *Miracle* they must reform, or *sink* or *perish*. For unless God alters the natural *Course* of things and hinders necessary *Causes* from producing their *Effects*, it will be as impossible to hinder the *Ruine* of a *Kingdom* that is overwhelmed with *Wickedness*, and obstinately continues so, as it is to save a *House* from burning that is wrapt and compassed round with *Flames*; because the burning of a *House* is not a more necessary Effect of the *Flames* that surround it, than the *Ruine* of a *Nation* is of the Sins that overspread it. One way therefore there is left, and only one, for such a *Nation* to save it self, and that is by *Repentance*; which brings me to the next Proposition in the Text, That true *Repentance* and *Amendment* is the certain way to prevent that *Ruine* which our *Iniquities* threaten. *Repent and turn*

*your*

*your selves from all your transgressions, so ini-  
quity shall not be your ruine.* But before I enter  
upon this *Proposition*, I shall draw a few  
practical Inferences from what hath been  
said.

1. From hence I infer what *plagues* and  
*nuisances* wicked Men are to a *Kingdom*, since  
the Tendency of *Sin* in so many particulars  
is so very *destructive* to its Welfare and  
*Interest*. These are the grand disturbers of  
*Israel* the wretched *Incendiaries* that set all  
in *Flames* and *Combustions* about them;  
their *Sins* are the *Trains* that do give *Fire*  
to those *Mines* of *Ruine* that sink and tear  
up *Kingdoms*, and their *Breasts* are the *Semi-  
naries* and *Harbourers* of those *Traitors* that  
do conspire against and undermine our *Peace*  
and *Happiness*. For as for those *Traytors*  
without, tho' they were a thousand times if  
possible more *crafty* and *restless* and *malicious*  
then they are, we might defy their hellish  
*Plots* and *Intreagues*, and smile at their  
vain Attempts did not our *Sins* contribute  
to make us miserable; but when we by our  
own *Wickedness* will joyn hands with their  
*restles* *Craft* and *Malice*, assist them against  
our selves and *co-operate* with them to our  
own destruction, what remedy is there for  
us? when the *sins* of our *Friends* are  
conspiring our *ruine* together with the *malice*  
of our *Enemies*, how can we hope either  
wholly

wholly to escape, or much longer to defer it? for if ever that destruction come upon us which hath been so long designing and is now hanging over us, this *Epitaph* will very well fit our *Tombs*, *Here lies a miserable Nation, whose Ruine is owing more to their own Sins than to all the Designs and Powers of their Enemies.* Consider this therefore, O you *Sinners* in this our *Sion*; you are, tho you know it not, in a strict confederacy with the *Priests* and *Jesuits* against your native *Country*, against the *Protestant Religion*; and against the *Liberties* and *Properties* of *English men*; you are accessory to all those *Treasons* which they have contrived, and are still contriving against the *Religion* and *Law* and *Gouverment* of the *Nation*; and if ever they thrive and take effect (which the *God of Heaven* avert) we may thank you for prospering and succeeding them; who by your *pride* and *sensuality*, your *fraud* and *faction*, your *covetousness* and *oppression* do what in you lies to ripen and give a prosperous birth to the *treasonous* designs of our common *Adversaries*. And therefore if yet you have any regard either for this sinking *Kingdom* whose *Womb* bore you; or to this bleeding *Church* whose *Paps* gave you suck ( both which in the most sorrowful postures that a *Church* and *Kingdom* can be well reduced to, are now crying out unto you, O

you our cruel and unnatural Children, have pity upon us! have pity upon us! ) if, I say, you have any regard either for the one or the other, O be now at last perswaded to commiserate their deplorable Condition, to take off those *loud-mouthed Sins* you have set upon them, and are now like a pack of *Hounds* tearing and worrying them in pieces.

2 From hence I infer what is the true Cause of those many *national* Evils which we feel and justly fear. For since *Iniquity* doth so directly tend to the *Ruine of a Nation*, to what other Cause may we more truly attribute either those present or those future Evils that have, or shall befall us? When any *Calamity* befalls us we are apt to ascribe it all either to *false* or *else* to *partial* Causes, and if we reckon *Sin* among the Causes, to be sure we skip and overlook our own. 'Tis the *Carelessness* or *ill Design* of this or t'other minister of State crys one; 'tis the *peevishness* and *Faction* of such a *Gang* and *Party*, crys another; 'tis the *Rigour* and *Severity* of those who comply with and contend for the *legal Establishment*, crys a third; when these at most are but a *partial* Cause, and the main Spring, God knows, of all our *Mischiefs* lies within our own *bosoms*. And tho' many of us are sensible, as we cannot well be otherwise, that *Sin* hath a great hand in all our *Sufferings* and *Calamities*, yet alas how few

few are there that reckon their own Sins into the tale: They are the sins of the *Court* crys the *City*, and the sins of the *City* crys the *Country*; they are the sins of the *Church* crys the *Separatist*, and the sins of the *Clergy* crys the *Laiy*, and the sins of the *Gentry* crys the *Commonalty*: Thus every on washes his own hands, and like the *Whore* in the *Proverbs*, *wipes his mouth and tryes I have done no wickedness*; so that tho' none are guiltless and every one stands accused by his *Antagonist*, yet if all may be believed, none are guilty: and so the *Judgments* of God are posted from *Tithing* to *Tithing* from one Party of Men to another, and no body will own them tho' they call us all *Father*; which is just as if a *company* of *People* in a dreadful *Conflagration* should fall a contending with one another at whose House the fire began, and in the mean time permit it quietly to burn on till it had consumed all before it: Whereas if we would put a stop to the *Judgments* that begin to ~~fire~~ about our ears we should every one reflect upon our selves, and bring our *Buckets* of *penitential Tears* to extinguish that part of them which our own sins have kindled; and if we would but do thus, if every Man would smite upon his own *Thigh* and cry, *Lord what have I done?* then we might hope so far that growing Flame put out and

quenched that now waves its *curled Head* and threatens *universal Ruine* : but till once we are brought to a sorrowful sense of our own *Sins*, and of the share they contribute to the *publick Mischiefs*, we are not so much as in the way of Recovery. For since the *Cause* of the Kingdoms *Sickness* lies, *God* knows, in all our *Breasts*, how is it possible we should conspire to remove the whole till we are every man sensible of his own part ? Let us therefore search and examine our own hearts what we have contributed to the *publick Disease*, and every one purge out his own particular share of it ; and then to be sure all will soon be well again, and this poor *Kingdom* that hath so many years been languishing under the *Sins* of its *Natives*, and is now reduced almost to its last *gasp*, will yet recover, and once more flourish in perfect *health* and *vigour*.

3. From hence I infer what is the just *Character* of those Men who by their *Principles* and *Practices* contribute to the *Ruine* of *Kingdoms*. For since *Iniquity* so directly tends to a *publick Ruine*, we may be sure that those *Principles* and *Practices* that naturally tend to the same end are *Principles* and *Practices* of *Iniquity* ; and yet good *God* ! how many such are there that under the fair disguises of *Christian Doctrines* and godly *Zeal*, and with their demure Looks and religious

ligious Countenances do many times seduce and *cajole* weak and well-disposed Minds into such seditious *Gangs*, mutinous Practices and treasonous Conspiracies as do too often end either in their own Ruine, or their native *Countrys*. Thus in the *Church of Rome*, what horrid and barbarous Practices have there been occasioned by those *Antichristian* Doctrines of the lawfulness of destroying *Hereticks*, deposing and murdering of Kings; How many *Kings* and *Emperors* have there been excommunicated, butchered and destroyed by them? How many flourishing *Kingdoms* have there been depopulated, wasted and imbrewed in blood by them? How many *millions* of *Men*, *Women* and *Children* have there been sacrificed to the demands of those inhumane and blood-thirsty Principles? Insomuch that it may be justly questioned, whether for 600 Years together, these Pretences of *Christianity* did not destroy more Lives then *Christianity* it self hath sav'd *Souls*. And would to God that these destroying Principles had been for ever confined within the Pale of that degenerate *Church*! Then might our *Reformation* have boldly challenged to it self the Spirit of *Peace* and *Meekness*, of unbounded *Charity*, unstained *Loyalty* and firm *Allegiance*, and without a blush in its face have upbraided that *Mother of Harlots* with be-

ing the only *Patroness of Treasons, and Rebels*, and *Confusion*. But alas, those that have turned the World upside down are come hither also, and have sown their mischievous Principles in our fruitful fields, where they have sprung up many an ill Weed; and these, God knows, have grown apace. For not to touch upon the old Sores, which for our own Credit fake and our *Religions*, O would to *God* were lost in perpetual Oblivion; how many are there this day among us that out of a pretence of Zeal for God and Religion, make it their business to devide and tear, rend and distract the *Kingdom*? who by starting Jealousies and ill surmises, fetching and carrying Tales and scandalous Reports against the *Government*, suggesting miscarriages of State that never were, and blackning and aggravating those that are, do what in them lies to blow up the Discontents of the Kingdom into an intestine Flame, and, whilst the common *Enemy* is boring a Hole in the bottom of the *Ship*, do set the *Mariners* together by the ears, that so while they are scuffling within they may neglect the danger from without, till one common Ruine involves them all, and Sinks them together with their Swords in one anothers bowels. And tho' it is notorious to all the World what a mighty *Bulwark* this *Church* hath

hath

hath always been to the *Reformed Religion*, how much it hath been the Dread and Envy of *Rome*, and the mark of her Power and Malice; how all her *Agents* have constantly conspired to fight neither against small nor great, but against the *Church of England*, in hope that if once this *Matter-fort* were dismantled, they should quickly force the lesser *Garisons* and *Citadels* to surrender; yet how, many Parties have we among our selves who yet pretend great Zeal to the *Reformation*, that industriously set themselves to batter down its *Sanctuary*, about its ears; that joyn their Throats in one common Cry with the *Priests* and *Jesuits*, *Down with her, down with her even to the ground*; and all this to gratify their prejudice against a few innocent and indifferent *Rites*, which as private *Communicants* they are very little, if at all, concerned in. I do not charge these Men with a *Popish Design*, tho' I am sure they charge us with it upon far less Reason; but this I say and will maintain it, that whilst they thus industriously set themselves to tear open the wounds of our *Church*, and widen them into incurable *Schisms*, they take a most effectual course to open a gap for *Popery* which stands at the door and only waits till the Breach is wide enough for it to enter

To conclude all therefore, seeing it is the Sin and Wickedness of *People* and *Nations* that is the main Spring of their Ruine and Destruction, let us, as we would escape that dismal Ruine, which for several years hath hung over our *Heads*, and hath been pouring it self upon the Heads of several neighbouring *Countrys*, and *Nations*, betake our selves to a deep *Humiliation* for, and hearty *Repentance* of our *Sins*, which threaten us more then all the Powers of our most powerful *Enemies*. We are now ingaged in a *War* against a great *Prince*, who hath not only by a most salvage and barbarous *Persecution* of his own *Subjects* proclaimed himself a mortal *Enemy* to our *Religion*, but also by his perfidious Violations of the Law of *Nations*, his infractions of the most sacred Ties and Obligations, and his unparallel'd *Cruelties* towards all that have fall'n within the Reach of his Power, hath render'd himself the common *Enemy* of *mankind*, and seems to have been raised up on purpose by *God* to be the *Plague* and *Scourge* of a wicked *World*; his Power having for several years hung over all *Christendom* like a dismal *Cloud* charged with *Thunder* and *Lightning*, and having discharged it self upon several *Countries* and *Nations* in such prodigious Showers of *Blood*, and *Tempests* of *Ruine* and *Devastation*, as scarce any *History* can

can paralel: against this mischievous *Power* that glories in nothing but *Outrage*, and triumphs upon the *Ruines of mankind*, we are now engaged in conjunction with almost all the *Christian World* in a common *Defence*, there being no remedy left us but either to repel and vanquish it or to lie at its feet, and tamely submit our selves to be trampled into *Destruction* by it: nor is there any *Nation* under the *Cope of Heaven* that hath greater advantages of curbing it in its *Ca-reer* than our own, if our own *Sins* and *in-teſtine Divisions* do not spoil all. Wherefore as we hope to succeed in this our necessary *Defence* of our *Religion* and our native *Country*, let us every one in our places in-deavour by laying aside all our *Malice* and *Revenge*, our *Pride* and *Faction*, to cement those unhappy *Breaches* that are among our selves, and all betake our selves to a serious and hearty *Repentance* for our own *Sins*, that thereby we may reconcile our selves to *God* and engage his *Almighty Power* to fight for us.

And thus I have done with the first Pro-  
position contain'd in these Words, [ *Repent and turn your selves from all your Transgressions, so Iniquity shall not be your ruine* ] That the Iniquity of any *People* or *Nation* tends di-  
rectly to their *Ruine*. And shall now pro-  
ceed to the second; viz.

That

That true Repentance and Amendment is  
the most effectual way to prevent that  
Ruine which our Iniquities do so naturally bring upon us.

This it is upon a twofold Influence it hath,

i. Upon God.

ii. Upon our Selves.

i. It hath a powerful Influence upon God, who is the *Sovereign Arbitrator* of the Fate of *Nations*, and doth dispose of their *Ruine* and *Happiness* as he pleases. For he being the *sovereign Lord* of the World, and suprem Moderator of all Issues and Events, there is no particular *Kingdom* or *Nation* that is exempt from his *Jurisdiction* and *Disposal*, and 'tis in his Power alone to determine of every one of them whether they shall be happy or miserable. *It is the Lord that killeth and that maketh alive; that bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up; the Lord that maketh poor and maketh rich, that bringeth low and liftest up,* 1 Sam. ii. 6, 7. And as he thus disposes of the Fate of particular *Persons*, so he doth much more of the Fate of particular *Nations*: for 'tis he that *encreaseth the Nations, and destroyeth them; he that enlargeth the Nations, and streightneth them,* Job xii. 23. And *Dan.* iv. 17. it is said, that *the most High ruleth in the Kingdom of men,* and

and giveth it to whomsoever he will. And in 2 Kings xix. 15. Hezekiah thus addresses to him, *Thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the Kingdoms of the earth.* And if the Government and Disposal of Nations be in Gods hand as you see it is, then whatsoever hath an influence upon God, to oblige and indear him to a Nation, must needs effectually conduce to its Recovery and Welfare; because it makes Him its Friend, who alone can make it happy and miserable: and that which indears God to us, who alone hath Power to rescue and recover us, must needs effectually conduce to our Recovery. Now that Repentance hath such an Influence upon God, will evidently appear whether we consider it,

1. As an Act of natural *Justice* and *Rectitude*; or,
2. As the primary End and Design of *Punishment*; or,
3. As the best *Reparation* we can make him for our *Rebellions* against him; or,
4. As the *Condition* upon which he hath voluntarily obliged himself to be reconciled unto us.

1. Consider it as an Act of natural *Justice* and *Rectitude*; and as such it must needs have a powerful *Influence* upon God: for *Justice*

Justice or *Rectitude* of Choice and Action are everlastingly founded in the *Nature* of God, to whom it is as natural to govern himself and all his Actions by the *best* and *purest Reason*, as it is to exist or live. So that whatsoever hath natural *Rectitude* in it, and is squared and regulated by right *Reason*, must needs be *harmonious* to the *Nature* of God, and consequently doth as naturally please and gratify Him as a musical Note doth a musical Ear: for every *Nature* hath a delightful *Gust* and *Relish* of that which is agreeable to it self; and therefore since it is natural to God himself to act according to the eternal *Reasons* of things, to see others act so too, must needs be *grateful* to his *Nature*; but to *repent* is the most *reasonable* Action that sinful Creatures can perform. For if it be best and most reasonable *not* to do *amiss* at all, then doubtless when we *have done amiss*, the next most reasonable is to resolve to do so *no more*, there being the *same* Reason why he that hath sinned should sin *no more*, as why he that hath not, should not sin at all. And therefore I cannot but wonder at the wild *Assertion* of some of our *Philosophical Sinners*, that to *repent* is an Argumeut of *meanness* of *Spirit*; and discovers in us a weak and *irresolute Mind*; as if, because I have plaid the *fool*, I must resolve to be a *Fool* for ever, for fear of being

being accounted *weak* and *irresolute*; as if to *change* a *mean* and *base* *Resolution* were a piece of *Meanness* and *Baseness*. Indeed to *enter* into *base* *Resolutions* argues a *base* or *inconsiderate* *Spirit*, but to *revoke* them is so far from being *base* or *mean*, that it is highly *rational* and *generous*; there being the *same* *Reason* for the *revoking* a *bad* *Resolution* as there is against the *making* it; and next to *not yielding* to an *unreasonable* motion, the *highest* *Bravery* in a *reasonable* *Nature* is *not to persist* in it. For if we are *reasonable* *Beings*, our *Strength* and *Bravery* must consist in being *constant* to our *Reason*; but to be *constant* *against* it, is to be *constant Fools*, or *constant Knaves*, or both; and if this be the *Character* of a *bravely resolute* *Mind*, much good may it do those *heroick* *Sinners* that count it a *Reproach* to *repent*. For the main of *Repentance* consists in the *changing* of *unreasonable* for *wise* and *reasonable* *Resolutions*, than which no *Change* can be more agreeable to the *eternal* *Laws* of *Reason*; and these *Laws* being founded in the *Nature* of *God*, this *Change* must be infinitely agreeable to him, and have a most powerful *Influence* upon him. For since to *repent* is the most *reasonable* *Action* that a *Sinner* can do, by what can *sinful* *Creatures* more effectually *indear* our selves to *God*;

God, who being most reasonable himself, must needs be most affected with that which is most reasonable in us, namely to consider  
2. Consider *Repentance* as the primary End and Design of Punishment, and as such it must needs have a powerful Influence upon God. For there being no such thing as a *blind unreasonable Vengeance* in the Nature of God he cannot be supposed to punish for Punishment sake, since that would be to inflict Misery on others merely to sport and recreate his own *Amour*, that being the only Passion in Nature which pure Mischiefe can gratify or please. Since therefore there is no such Affection in the Nature of God, we may be sure he doth not punish to please Himself, but to reform and amend his criminal Creatures, and that it is for the *Gods* that Punishment doth us, and not for any Good that it doth *Him* that he chooses and inflicts it upon us; for he needs not our Misery to make him happy, being most compleatly happy, already in the immense Perfection of his own *Nature*; and it is nothing but the Want of Happiness in *it* self that makes any *Being* desire or delight another's Misery. Since therefore God cannot be supposed to design our Punishment under the Notion of a pure Misery, it thence necessarily follows that if he designs any thing; as to be sure he doth, it must be to do

do us or others Good by it, and consequently that since it is for the sake of this Good that he inflicts it, he will most readily dispense with it, if *that* he but answered and obtained without it. But now our *Repenitance* both in a great measure answer and supply the End of our *Punishment*, which is either to *reform* us when we have done amiss, or to *warn* others by our Example not to tread in our Footsteps; both which Ends are in an high degree obtained in our unsiegnd *Repentance*. For if we heartily *repent* of our past *Iniquities*, we shall be sure to *avert* them for the future; and it is impossible that *Repentance* should be true, which doth not upon the first Opportunity commence into an actual *Reformation*: and so if it be true also, it will render us exemplary *Warnings* unto others; for it will inflict upon us such bitter *Sorrows*, such deep *Remorses* and stinging *Reflections* as will render us almost as great and eminent *Examples* of the Evil and Folly of our *Sins*, as the *Punishments* that were intended against them and those of our *Brotherhood* in *Iniquity* that will indeed warning *By us*, when they see the *Treachery* and *strength* of our *Repentance*, how it Pierces, Wounds, and Mortifies our *Souls*; in all probability would be as little affected should they instead of that see the hand of God upon us chastising and correcting us for

for our Follies. For he that heartily *repents*, makes almost as woful an *Experiment* of the Folly and Evil of his *Sin*, as he that hath felt the Punishment of it ; and next to a bleeding punished *Criminal*, there is no such *Example* of the Madness of *Sin* as a weeping, merciful, and dejected *Penitent*. Since therefore in both these respects *Repentance* doth so effectually supply the designs of our *Punishment*, we may be sure the *merciful* God who doth always Punish in order to those Designs, will be very much influenced by it. For every *Agent* is satisfied, when it hath its End, and therefore since our *Repentance* will supply those Ends which God designs in our *Punishment*, we may be sure it will highly please and gratify him ; for in our *Repentance* he hath what he aimed at, when he designed to *punish* us, and to be sure good God will never be so fond of the *Miseries* of his *Creatures* as to punish them to no purpose.

3. Consider *Repentance* as the best *Reparation* we can make for our past *Sins* and *Rebellions*, and as such also it must needs have a mighty *Influence* upon God. 'Tis true for Sinners to make a *full* *Reparation* to God for the *Affronts* and *Dishonors* they have cast upon him, is *impossible*; because what they have *done* they can no more *undo*, than make what is *past* never to have *been*.

But

but yet he that *heartily repents* of his former Sins, for as much as he hates and laments them, and wishes from his Soul that he had never done them, doth hereby morally *cancel* and *revoke* them; for this universal Act of *Nolition* extending to all his past bad *Choices*, tho' it cannot so undo as to cause them not to have been, yet it doth so *unwill* and *unchoose* them, as if they were not, they should never be. 'Tis true, God being our *supream* Lord and Lawgiver, the only *compleat* Satisfaction we can personally render him is *perfect unsinning obedience* to his Laws, of which when we have once fail'd there is no after-Act of our own can make him a perfect *Reparation*; because if our after-Act be an Act of *Obedience* (as all good and virtuous ones are) God hath the *same* Right to it, as he had to that wherein we failed, and 'tis impossible that by satisfying *one* Debt we should make a full Repayment of *another*. But of all our after-*Reparations* there is none aproaches so near to *Innocence* and unsinning *Obedience*, as this of unfeigned *Repentance*; for all the difference between an *innocent Person* and a true *Penitent* is only this, that the former never *chose* to Sin, and the latter hath *unchosen* all his Sinful *Choices*; the one *did not Sin* when it was in his power to do it, the other would not have sinned, if it were in his power not to do it. So that tho' *Re-*

penitance is by no means equivalent to *Innocence*, yet because of all the after-Acts of a *nocent* Person it makes the nearest approach to it, it necessarily follows that it is the best and highest *Reparation* that any *sinful Creature* can make to an *offended* God. What better *Reparation* can I make for the *Delight* and *Pleasure* I have taken in *offending* him than to submit my self to the *Pains* and *Anguish* of a bitter and severe *Repentance* for it? How can I more effectually repair the many *Dishonours* I have done him by my *base* and *impious Actions*, the shamelets *Affronts* I have put upon him, then by laying my *stubborn Will* at his *feet*, putting on *Shame* and *Confusion* of Face, and abhorring my self in *Dust* and *Ashes* before him. This being therefore the *best Satisfaction* that such a *sinful* People as we are can make to our *offended* but most *merciful* God, we may justly hope, that if we render him *this*, it will have an auspicious *Influence* upon him to *incline* him towards us and *avert* his *just Displeasure* from us. When he shall see us prostrate at his *Feet*, acknowledging with *sorrowful* *Hearts* the infinite *Injuries* we have done him, offering him all the *poor Amends* we can make him, and *grieving* that we can offer him no more; such a *moving Spectacle* cannot but kindle in him a *Relenting* towards us, and cause his *propitious Bowels* to resound with *Eccles's* *of Mercy*.

4. And

4. And lastly, consider *Repentance* as the *Condition* upon which God hath voluntarily engaged himself to be reconciled unto us, and as such also it must needs have a *powerful Influence* upon him. So in the Text you see he hath *obliged* himself, upon the *Repentance* of wicked People, to interpose between their *Sin* and *Ruine*, *So iniquity shall not be your ruine.* So also *Job xxxvi. 8, 9, 10, 11.* you have an excellent Account of Gods *Readiness* to relieve a repenting People, *In their Adversity if they be bound in fetters and holden in cords of affliction, then he sheweth them their work and their transgression wherein they have exceeded.* He openeth also their ears to *discipline* and *commandeth* that they *return from their iniquity.* If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in *prosperity* and their years in *pleasure.* But this perhaps you will say is only a Relation of what God *usually* doth, and not a Promise by which he *obliges* himself always to do so well, but it supposes such a Promise on Gods part; else there could have been no sure Foundation for *Elihu* to have promised it. But then *Isai. 1. 16, 17, 18.* you have Gods own word for it, *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well. Come now and let us reason togeather saith the Lord, tho' your sins be as Scarlet, they shall be*

white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool. If you be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the Land. So also *Hosea. xiv. 1, 2. 4.* O Israel return unto the Lord thy God for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words and turn to the Lord, say unto him take away all iniquity and receive us graciously, so will we render thee the calves of our lips. To which in the 4th Verse God returns this answer of mercy, I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel, he shall grow as a lilly and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. But these Promises perhaps you will say, respect Israel only, and consequently ought not to be extended unto other Nations; well then let us see in the last place what he hath said to Nations in general *Jerem. xviii. 7, 8.* At what time I shall speak concerning a Nation and concerning a Kingdom to pluck up and to pull down and to destroy it, if that Nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. So that what he had promised before to Israel his People here extends to all Nations, viz. that upon their Repentance he will be favourable to them, and repent of the Evil he intended against them; which gives us as great a Certainty of the good Influence of our Repentance upon him

as we can have of his eternal *Truth* which is the Foundation of all Certainty. So that if to have God for our *Friend* can contribute any thing to the *saving* us from an impending *Ruine*, then must our *Repentance* which makes him our *Friend* be so far the Means of our *Salvation*.

2. As *Repentance* hath a great Influence upon *God* to move and incline him to *rescue* us from *Ruine*, so it hath also a mighty Influence upon *us* towards the *preventing* and *obviating* our *Ruine*; so that tho' there were no such thing as a *God* for it to work upon and engage in our *Defence* and *Protection*, or tho' that *God* should wholly withdraw himself from *Action*, and absolutely refuse to *intermeddle* in our *Affairs*; yet would our *Repentance* it self by its own *natural* and *necessary* influence most effectually operate towards the *prevention* of that *Publick Ruine*; and that these four ways :

1. As it will throughly *awaken* us into a due sense of our *Danger*.

2. As it will *animate* and *encourage* us with the *Hope* of *Success* upon the *Use* of due and proper *Means*.

4. As it will take us *off* from those *mischiefous Actions* which do to necessarily contribute to our *Ruine*.

4. As it will put us upon such a *regular Course* of *Action* as doth naturally tend

to the *publick Good* In all which respects, as I shall shew you, it would be an *effectual Means* of our Recovery.

1. True *Repentance* naturally *awakens* us into a due and serious *Sense* of our *Danger*. For a *vicious Life* doth naturally lull men into a *Sottish* and *Senseless Security*; it makes them *stupid* and *reckless*, and bereaves them of their *natural Foresight* and *Sagacity*; for besides that it takes off their *Minds* from the exercise of *Reason*, and infatuates them with *weak* and *phantastick Prejudices*; it renders them so soft and indulgent to their own *luxurious* and *effeminate Genius*, that they cannot indure any *sad* or *serious thoughts* should intermingle with their *Jovial Airs*. So that if *Danger* stands at any *distance* from them, they wilfully *wink* at it, and are afraid to look it in the face, lest it should suggest such thoughts to them as would disturb the *Scenes* of their *Mirth*, and dash their *Draughts* of *sinful Pleasures* with *Wormwood*. Hence *Amos vi. 1. 3.* it is made the character of the wicked *Israelites* that lived at ease in *Zion*, that they put far from them the *evil day*, that is, they would not entertain a thought of the *Nearness* of their *Danger*, lest it should prove a *Thorn* in their *Pillows*, and *disturb* their soft and beloved *ease*. So also *Hosea xi. 9.* *Strangers have devoured his strength*, (faith

he speaking of that wicked People) and he knoweth it not, yea gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he perceiveth it not; that is, tho' they were exceedingly wasted already and had all the *Symptoms* of an approaching *Ruine* upon them, yet they were so *intent* upon their *Lusts*, and so *besotted* by them, that they took no notice of it. And if Men will be so *stupid* as to neglect their *Danger*, and never think of *retreating* till they have run themselves into the *Jaws* of it, what *Remedy* is there for them? how can they *escape* that will sleep on *securely* upon the *Brinks* of a *Precipice*, and will not regard their danger till they are dropping *headlong* into it, and are fallen beyond *Prevention* or *Recovery*? But when once Men be-take themselves to a course of *serious Repentance*, they will soon recover out of this their *Lethargick* temper. For *Repentance* will not only chase away all those *effeminate Lusts* which barr'd their *Understanding* against all *Apprehensions* of *Danger*, and rendred them so *supine* and *regardless*, but it will make them deeply *sensible* of the *Desert* of their *Sin*, and what *fearful Effects* are to be expected from it; so that now they will be so far from thrusting *from them* the *Thoughts* of their *Danger*, that they will reckon it among the numberles Miracles of Gods *Goodness* that they were not

long ago swallowed up and consumed by it : and besides those *visible* Dangers that attend them in the *common* Course of Things, they will discern a *black* Cloud arising out of their own *GUILTS*, and gathering into storms of *Vengeance*, and look upon their *past* *WICKEDNESS* as the *dire* *Omens* of an *approaching* *JUDGMENT* ; and being thus awaken'd into a *Sense* of the Danger that threatens them, they are so far on their way towards an *happy* *RECOVERY*.

2. True *Repentance* will also animate and encourage a People with the *Hope* of *Success* upon the use of *due* and *proper* *Means*. It is the *natural* *Property* of a *wicked* *Life* to render Men *secure* when Danger is at a *distance*, and *desperate* when it is *near* at hand ; when it is *remote* they are afraid to mind it lest it should *interrupt* their *Pleasures*, and mingle *Discords* with their *Harmony* ; but when by reason of their *Fear* they are *forced* to mind it, the sudden *unexpected* *Alarm* it gives them raises such an *Uproar* in their *Thoughts* that they can neither *find* nor *force* an *Escape* from it. For the *opposite* *Affections* of *Humane* *Nature* succeed one another in the *same* *Degree*. Thus when we *hate* those whom we *lov'd* we usually *hate* them in the *same* *degree* that we *lov'd* them ; and when two *contrary* *Passions* follow one another , they are generally

nerally both *extream*, and by how much the *foregoer* exceeded the just *medium* of one way, by so much will the *follower* exceed the other; just like the *vibrations* of a *Pendulum*, the which the farther you swing it this way, the farther it will return the *other*; and consequently the more we exceed in *Security* whilst *Danger* is pursuing us, the more we shall exceed in *Fear* when it hath overtaken us. So that when out of an *extravagant* Indulgence to their *sinful* Pleasures Men shut their Eyes against *approaching* *Danger*, and will not open them till it is just *upon* them and stares them in the Face, the *gastly* and *surprizing* *Spectacle* will presently transport them out of *one* *Extream* into *another*, out of a deep *Security* into a dead *Despair*; especially considering how naturally the *Sense* of *Danger* awakens in *guilty* *Minds* their natural *Dread* of *God*, and fills them with *fearful* *Expectations* from *Him*: and when a *Man* awakes upon the *brinks* of a *Precipice* and all on a *suddain* sees an *apparent* *Destruction* before him, and by this *Sight* is at the same time roused into a *dismal* *Apprehension* of an *Almighty* *Vengeance* behind him stretching forth its arm to thrust him head-long down, how must it needs *appale* and *astonish* him, and *disarm* him of all *Hope* and *Power* of *escaping*. So that out of a *secure* *Impenitence*, you

you see, there is but one remove into an *heartless Desperation*: and when Men are *desperate* in the midst of danger, and are reduced to their wits end; when they have neither *Prudence* to forecast, nor *Courage* to execute any method of Recovery, without a *Miracle* their *Ruine* is unavoidable. Of this you have an eminent Example in the wicked *Israelites*, who when their Danger was *afar off* were most unreasonably *secure* and *regardless* of it, but when *Senacherib's Army* had *invested* their *City*, and they saw themselves *surrounded* with *Ruine* on every side, then their *Security* immediately converts into the most *frightful* and *horrid Apprehensions*; for so the *Prophet* describes it *Isaiah xxxiii. 14.* *The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprized the hypocrites: who amongst us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* Whilst the *Power* of that *haughty Monarch* was at a *distance* from them, they *laughed* at and *dispised* it; but now it is at their *doors* they are *so frightened* at it, that they had no softer *Words* to express it by than *devouring fire* and *everlasting burnings*: So that if God had not rescued them by a *Miracle*, their *unmanly Fears* had so disarmed them, that they would have never been able to defend themselves. But now by our *Repentance* we do most certainly prevent being

ing reduced to this *woful* Extremity ; for that will open our Eyes to all approaching *Dangers*, and remove those effeminate *Lusts* out of our way which interrupted our *Prospect* of them ; so that we shall see them afar off, and having a free *Sight* and *Expectance* of them, shall not be *surpriz'd* by them when they draw *nearer*, and are ready to fasten upon us ; by which means we shall have *Time* to arm and fortify our selves against them, and to prepare to receive them with *Courage* and *Conduct*. And when they are come, our *Repentance* will also animate us with the *Hopes* of a timely *Relief* and *Succour* from above, and encourage us to hold out to the last extremity in *Expectance* of God's appearing in the *Mount*, and a timely *Interposure* between us and *Ruine*. For this being the *Condition* upon which God hath promised us his *Favour* and *Friendship*, there is no Reason why we should be *desperate*, so long as we live in the *Performance* of it. So that the Sense of our unfeigned *Repentance* will inspire us with *joyful* *Hope* that God is for us ; and what Danger can *dishearten* us under this glorious *Hope* that infinite *Wisdom* and *Power* is on our side ?

3. True *Repentance* doth also abolish those *mischievous Actions* which do naturally contribute to the *Ruine* of a People. How much a *wicked* Course of Life tends to a Nations

*Ruine*,

Ruine, is notorious enough to any Man that hath been an Observer of the Effects and Consequences of humane Actions; how it infatuates their Counsels, weakens their Courage, rends their Unity and Concord; how it disorders them in all their natural Respects and Dependencies, consumes their Wealth, and prostitutes their Reputation; and how by all these mischievous Effects it gradually wastes and consumes them, and lays the Foundation of their inevitable Ruine. So that whilst Vice and Wickedness prevail in a Nation, 'tis like a lingering Consumption in our Bodies that sooths us into an Opinion that we are well and in Health, or flatters us with fair Hopes of Recovery; but in the mean time is undermining the Fort of our Life, and preying upon our Vitals. But it is the most wretched piece of Deceit in the World for a Nation to think it self well while it is wicked; for so many Vices as it hath growing in it, so many Diseases it hath engendering in its Bowels, which tho' it may struggle with a while by the natural Strength and Vigour of its Constitution, will by degrees inevitably weaken it, and without a speedy and effectual Purgation finally consume and destroy it; and if it were the best constituted Nation in the World, it would be impossible for it not to decay and languish under the malignant Influence of an Epidemical Wickedness. That therefore

fore which purges away this *corrupt* Humor out of which all *National Diseases* spring, must needs be the most *effectual* Means of a *dying Nations Recovery*, and that, and that only, is *Repentance*, one *essential* Part whereof consists in putting off the Body of *Sin*, ceasing to do *Evil* and denying all *Un-godliness* and *Worldly Lusts*. And if once this bad *Cause* were removed, all the mischievous *Effects* of it would immediately cease, and thereupon the *sick* and *declining* Kingdom that groans and languishes under them would immediately *mend*, and in a little time *recover* its native *Health* and *Vigour*. For what should hinder it from growing *well*, when the malignant *Cause* of all its *Distempers* is removed? when that which *befools* its *Counsels*, *dissolves* its *Courage*, *disorders* its *Harmony*, *breaks* its *Unity*, *lavishes* out its *Wealth* and *Reputation* is utterly abolish'd; what should hinder it from growing up again into a *wise* and a *valiant*, an *orderly* and *unanimous*, a *wealthy* and *renowned* Nation?

4. And lastly, true *Repentance* doth also put us upon such a *Course of Action* as doth naturally tend to the *Publick Good*. For *Repentance* doth not only consist in *ceasing* to do *Evil*, but in *learning* to do *Well*, in putting *on* the *new Man* as well as putting *off* the *old*, that is, it is an *intire Submission*

of

of our souls to God, to *do* what he *commands*, as well as to *forbear* what he *forbids*, and the *matter* of his Commands is such as all of it tends to the *publick Good*: and if the several *Ranks* and *Orders* of Men whereof a *Nation* is composed would but *unanimously* conspire in that Course of Action which God hath enjoyned, it would doubtless more contribute to the *Weal and Prosperity* of such a Nation, than the *wisest Counsels* or most *puissant Forces* without it. If those that sit at the *Helm* would but once resolve to steer by those excellent Rules of honest *Prudence*, impartial *Justice*, discreet *Mercy*, wise *Liberality*, advised *Constancy* and *Magnanimity*, it would doubtless render their *Government* far more *safe* and *easy*, more *useful*, and *prosperous*, than all the crafty *Tricks*, dark *Intreagues*, and wiley *Subterfuges* of wicked *Policy*, which instead of *promoting* the *Government* do generally lead it into a perplexed Maze, and leave it there miserably *bewildred* and *intangled*. Again, If those that are *Subjects* would but learn to govern themselves by those Laws of *Candor* and *Modesty*, of *Meekness* and *Fidelity*, of *Submission* and *Loyalty*, which God hath enjoyned them; with what *Peace* and *Quiet*, *Safety* and *Contentment* might they enjoy themselves under the *Shadow* of *Government*. In a word, If the *Rich* would be  
but

but as *courteous* and *charitable*, the *Poor* as *thankful* and *industrious*, and all as *just* and *honest*, as *kind* and *gentle*, as ready to *assist*, *forbear* and *forgive* one another as God *requires*, what a most *glorious* and *happy* Society would there spring out of such a *regular* Course of Action? doubtless for *Peace* and *Contentment*, for *Bliss* and *Happiness*, next to *Heaven* it self, there is no Place comparable to a *virtuous Nation*, and were I in quest of a *terrestrial Paradise*, I should sooner expect it in a barren *Wilderness* inhabited with a *virtuous* People, than in the most *fruitful* and *delicious Canaan* peopled with *wicked* and *degenerous* Natives. Since therefore a *virtuous* Course of Action hath so *direct* a Tendency to the *publick Good*, it hence necessarily follows that *Repentance*, which is the Entrance and Introduction to it, must needs very much contribute to the *Safety* and *Recovery* of a *Nation*; because it puts the several parts of it into *such a Course* of Life and Conversation as mutually conduces to the *Peace* and *Happiness* and *Preservation* of the Whole: so that whether we consider the powerful *Influence* it hath upon *God*, or the good *Effect* it hath upon *us*, you see 'tis a most *efficacious* Instrument of *publick Happiness* and *Salvation*. Wherefore if the Consideration of our own *private Interest*, and everlasting fate in *another World* be not sufficient

ficient to move us to a serious *Repentance*, let us add to this the Consideration of our *temporal Concerns*, which are all involved in the fate of the *Nation*. For the *publick Good* is a common *Bank* in which every *member* hath a *share*, and consequently whatsoever *Damage that* suffers, we must expect to bear *our Part* of it. And yet, God help us! if we impartially view the *Designs* and *Behaviour* of the *Generality*, we would hardly think that they did seriously believe there were any such thing as a *Common Weal* among us, every one almost endeavouring to advance his *own Interest* though it be upon the *publick Ruine*, and all our *Pretences* to the *Publick* being little else but a contracting of *Parties* runing a *Tilt* at one another, whilst the *Common Good* lies between them, and is equally trampled on by *both sides*. Wherefore as we would not betray our *Common Interest*, and bury our selves in the *publick Ruine*, let us be perswaded to consider our ways before it be too late, and turn to the *Lord* by a deep and hearty *Repentance*. And to move you hereunto I shall desire you to consider these few things.

1. What imminent Danger we are in.
2. How much we have *all* contributed to it.
3. How possible it is to *prevent* it by our timely *Repentance*.
4. How

4. How much our *personal Repentance* will avail us that we should not prevent it.

5. How dearly we will *repent* when it is too late, if we do not endeavour the prevention of it by *repenting now*.

1. Consider the imminent *Danger* we are in. For if we consider our *present Circumstances*, how many *visible Causes* there are conspiring to effect our *Ruine*, how we lye open to the *common Adversary* that doth so vigorously pursue our *Destruction*, and like an unwalled *Vineyard* are surrounded with *wild Boars* without, and over-run with *little Foxes* within, which, tho' they are of different *Kinds*, agree in the same *Ends*, and concur to *walte* and to *destroy*? how whilst these *little Foxes* are pulling down the *Vine* above, the *wild boars* are waiting underneath to seize and to devour both; how the restless and indefatigable *Malice* of our *Romish Adversaries* without is assisted with the furious *Zeal* of our *hair-brain'd Factions* within, who tho' they cannot be insensible how much their *Divisions weaken* and *expose* us, yet seem resolved rather to *venture* all than not to be *uppermost*; how our *Counsels puzzl'd* and *entangled*, and our *Procedures clogg'd* and *incumbred*; how our *Choices* are *poiz'd* and *suspended* between *contrary Evils* that seem so *equally great*, that we can hardly determine which is the *least*; in a

word, how our Mischiefs are *chain'd* and *link'd* to one another, so that we cannot remove one without drawing on *another* in the room of it, and the suspicion of *future* makes us afraid to provide against *present* mischiefs; if, I say, we consider all these things, we cannot but be sensible how *great* and *near* our Danger is, and how earnestly it calls upon us for a *speedy* and *effectual* Remedy. And when we are *encompass'd* with so many Dangers on every side, is it not prodigious *Sottishness* for us to stand gazing on them with our Hands in our Bosoms, making Speeches about them, and telling frightful Stories of them to one another, whilst like a spreading *Gangreen* they are growing upon us, and creeping insensibly to our *Hearts*, whilst the proper Remedy of them is in our *own* hands, and by a *timely* Application we may quickly *cure* and *prevent* them? When we see our selves upon the *Borders* of *Ruine*, is it a time to stand chattering at the *Wind*, spending our Breath in *fruitless* Complaints, *impotent* Invectives, and *factious* Murmuring? When if, instead of finding fault with our *Superiors*, arraigning the *Government*, and quarrelling at the *publick* Management and *Conduct*, we would at least resolve to find Fault with *our selves*, arraign *our own* *Vices* at the Bar of an *impartial* Conscience, and make a through *Inquisition* into the ill *Conduct*

Conduct of *our own* Lives and Manners, we might *cure* the Evils and *prevent* the Dangers which we talk and complain of to no purpose? Certainly if ever Dangers call'd for a speedy *Repentance*, ours do; but if we will be deaf to their Cries we desperately abandon our selves to the dismal and piteous Desert of *our own* Folly and Madness.

2. Consider how much we have *all* contributed to the Dangers that are pressing upon us. I doubt if we *impartially* survey our *selves* and take a severe Account of our *own* Doings, there be very *few*, if *any*, that will be able to *acquit* themselves of having some hand in those publick *Mischiefs* that hang over us; that in *all* Particulars have behaved themselves so soberly and circumspectly as to contribute *nothing* towards the filling up the Kingdoms Iniquities. Tho' *many* of us indeed have not been carried away with the impetuous Current of open *Profaneness* and *Debauchery*, yet perhaps we have suffered our selves to be born down with the contrary Stream of *Faction*, *Schism*, or demure *Hypocrisy*; by which we have not only *scandaliz'd* our Religion, and *weaken'd* the Interest of it, *imbroiled* our Government, and *disturbed* the methods of our *Happiness*; but also highly *incens'd* against us the God of *Peace* and *Truth*, and *Order*. And tho'

others of us have neither been profane nor factious, yet it may be we have been remiss and lukewarm in Religion, or extreamly unfruitful under those rich Manurings and growing Showers which it continually affords us; by which we have mightily provok'd our God to remove our Candlestick, and leave us in the dark; to cut us down like fruitless Trees that are good for nothing, but only to burthen and cumber the ground: and if one way or 'tother we have contributed to those publick Calamities that threaten us, we have no other way to repair the Injury we have done our Country, but by our timely and seriots Repentance: this is the only Balsam by which we can hope to heal those Wounds we have given her; and if when we have wounded we refuse to cure her, 'tho the Means are in our own hands, we are doubly guilty of her Blood, and shall be doubly charg'd with it whenever an Inquisition is made for it. So that Repentance is a Debt we owe the Nation for the Mischiefs which our Sins have done to it, and which we can no otherwise repair but by repenting of those Sins before it is too late, lest we leave such a Reckoning behind us as will ruine the Kingdom, and undo succeeding Generations to discharge it.

3. Consider how possible it is yet to prevent our Danger by a timely Repentance.

Tho'

Tho' our Condition be full of *Hazard*, yet, God be praised, it is not altogether *desperate*; tho' we are *inter pontem & fontem* descending between the Bridge and River, yet there are a thousand Accidents may *intervene*, and *tatch* us in our Fall and set us *safe* a shore again; and that *Almighty Providence* which orders and disposes the *Issues* and *Events* of *Things*, hath infinite ways which we foresee not, to change the *confused* Scene of our Affairs, and reduce our *Chaos* into *Order*. And how *willing* and *ready* he is to do it, is visible enough by his *Long-suffering* towards us, and his *patient* *Endurance* of our Provocations, in expectation that at length his *goodness* may lead us to *Repentance*. How *careful* and *industrious* hath he been to *discover* *Danger* to us? to draw the *Curtain* from before the dark *Designs* of our *Enemies*, and to *unmask* their intended *Mischiefs* in despite of all their *Arts* of *Concealment*? And considering thro' how many *Difficulties* the Providence of God hath pressed in carrying on the happy *Discovery*, how strangely he hath forced it on, and scattered the *Clouds* before it, we have abundant Reason to acknowledge his *Readiness* to succour and relieve us, to prevent our being surprized with an unexpected *Ruine*, and swallowed up by it before we were aware. For what should his Aim be in

shewing us our Danger, but only to awake us to *Repentance*, that so by that powerful Motive he might be induced to *rescue* and *deliver* us; why should he *warn* us so long before hand of the Blow that is falling upon us, but only to give us Space and Opportunity to *prevent* it by our timely *Repentance*? So that ever since the *Discovery* of our Danger, *Deliverance* hath been *waiting* upon us, expecting that happy moment when we would open the door of our *Repentance* to it, and invite it in, and make it welcome. But hitherto, alas! we have shut the door against it, and made it *wait* in vain: for several Months the willing *Child* hath been strugling for Birth in the *Womb* of *Providence*, and yet it is unborn; and still it struggles, but all in vain, for want of our *Repentance* to open the *Womb* to it, and promote its *travail* to a happy Birth. And do we yet stand still as Persons *unconcern'd*, when ours, our *Country's*, and our *Childrens* Fate depends upon the Issue of it? When we may yet be safe, if by *abandoning* our Wickedness we will but *assist* to our *Deliverance*, shall we stand looking on with our Hands in our Bosoms, and see it stifled in the *Womb*?

4. Consider how much our *personal Repentance* will avail us tho' we should not prevent our present Danger by it. For I know

know it will be objected, To what purpose should *we* repent, if *others* still go on in their *Wickedness*? Can it be hoped that *our personal Amendment* should have such a mighty *Influence* as to disperse that mighty *Cloud of Judgments* that hangs over the whole *Nation*? To which, in the first place, I answer, that perhaps it *may*. It may be there is not yet a sufficient Number of *righteous Persons* among us to move the holy God to be propitious to this *sinful Nation*; and if for the sake of *five righteous Persons* God would have saved a *Sodom*, why may not you hope that by adding your *selves* to the far greater number of *righteous Persons* among *us*, you may yet prevail with God to save the whole *Nation*; and for the *possible* Hope of being *Saviours* to our native *Country*, who would not make such a *cheap* and *easy* Experiment? But suppose it should not produce this *happy Effect*, that notwithstanding our *personal Repentance* the *Cloud* should break, and discharge a bloody *Storm* upon the *Kingdom*; yet I dare secure you, you shall never have Cause to *repent* of your *Repentance*; for God will either call you into his *Chambers*, shut his door upon you, and hide you for a little moment till the *Indignation* is *overpast*, or he will turn it into such an inestimable *Blessing* that you shall be sure to reap from it un-

speakably more *Good* than *Prejudice*; and whilst *impenitent Wretches* shall be lashed at the same time both by God and their own *Consciences*, whilst they shall be surrounded with *Darkness* and *Horror* on every side, and not be able to discover any *glimps* of *day* either within, or without, or above them; whilst *Heaven* and *Earth*, and their own *Consciences* are storming together about their *Ears*, so that which way soever they turn themselves, they are *miserable*; whilst God disowns them, their own *Consciences* reproach them, and the *World* will no longer help or succour them; you, being reconciled by your *Repentance* both to your God and your *Conscience*, will have a *safe Retreat* within your own *Bosoms*, whereinto you may retire, and be merry in spight of *Fortune*; and being *there* entertained with the ravishing sense of your *Fathers Love*, with the soft *Harmonies* of a quiet *Conscience*, and the glorious *Hopes* of a blessed *Immortality* hereafter, you will not only be enabled to *support* your share of the *Publick Calamity*, but also to *rejoyce* and *triumph* under it. So that would you be but persuaded to *repent*, I durst assure you, you shall find the Benefit of it either in the Removal of the *Judgments* you fear, or in the Assistance it would give you to *undergo* them bravely.

5. And lastly, Consider how *dearly* we shall repent when it is *too late*; if we do not endeavour to *prevent* our Danger by repenting *now* when we are groveling under those dreadful *Judgments* that hang lowering over us. When our *Religion*, *Liberties* and *Properties* are seized, and become a prey to our insulting *Enemies*; when our *Country* is spoiled or imbrewed in Blood by *intestine* Broils or *Forein* Invasions, and all is involved in *Ruines* and *Confusions* round about us; then we shall remember with the Tears in our Eyes that we *had once* an Opportunity to be *happy*; that if we would have been contented to part with a few *base Lusts* that did *unman* and *prostitute* our *Natures*, we might have been still a *blessed* and *prosperous* People; that if we would have been so *wise* as to have sacrificed to Gods approaching *Judgments* our *Sensuality* and *Profaneness*, our *Faction*, *Oppression* and *Hypocrisy*, they would *then* have fairly retreated and left us in the *quiet* Enjoyment of all our *spiritual* and *temporal* *Blessings* we enjoy'd; whereas *now* being incensed and drawn on by our *desperate* *Obstinacy*, they have made a *dismal* *Spoil* of all, and left us nothing but our *Sins* and *GUILTS* to bear us company in our *Miseries*. When we shall see our desolate *Country* that was heretofore the *Queen of Nations* sitting like a *mournful*

*Widow*

Widow in the dust, with her Head *uncrowned*, her Garments *torn*, her Breast *wounded*, and all her Parts besmeared with *Blood*; when we shall see our *Church* unpaled and all her fences trodden down by wild *Beasts*; her *Beauty* defaced, her Sun extinguished, or overcast with *Darkness* and *Confusion*; how will it *cut* our *Hearts* to think that all this is the Product of our own *Follies*, and that if we would have been *persuaded* *betime* to abandon our *Lufts* and *listened* to *sober* *Counsels*, all these *dismal* *Ruins* and *Desolations* might have easily been *prevented*. O then we shall lament our *Follies* and *wring* our woful hands, and *wish* a thousand and a thousand times that we had been *wiser* before it was *too late*! Seeing therefore it is not *yet* *too late*, let us for once *resolve* to make a *tryal* what good our *Repentance* can do the *Publick*; and O would to *God* we would once *conspire* to make this blessed *Experiment*! and if upon our making it, a *Cure* doth not yet follow, if we do not sensibly *perceive* our *Grievances* *abate*, our *Dangers* *vanish*, our *Enemies* *weakened* and *disheartned*, and our broken *Counsels* *retrieved* and *united* in the *publick* *Good*, I will be contented to undergo *Cassandra's* *Fate* never to be believed in my *Affirmations* more. For this I am sure of, *Repentance* cannot fail of a *good* *Effect*, and that besides

sides all the Good it would do us by its own *natural* and *necessary Influence*, it would reconcile *Him* to us that hath the disposal of our Fate, and then all would go well, and *God even our own God would give us his blessing*. Which he of his infinite Mercy grant, to whom with his eternal Son and Spirit be ascribed of us and all the world all Honour and Glory and Power from this time forth and for evermore. *Amen.*

the people that he did not see him. And he said unto them, Go ye into the town of Nazareth, where I grew up, and ye shall see me. And he came down with them, and stood in the temple, and taught. And the people were astonished at his doctrine. And they said, Is not this the carpenter, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we knew? Is not this Jesus, the carpenter? And he went out of the temple, and came down to Nazareth, where he grew up, and was brought up: and he was known unto them, and they despised him, saying, He is Jesus the son of Joseph. Then he went out of Nazareth, and came into the region of Galilee, and was called the Christ. **MATTHEW**

22. yd. of the

blow

to istur. MATTHEW III. 8.

Bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance.

**T**hese Words are a Part of *John Baptist's Sermon to the Pharisees and Sadducees* of whom mention is made in the foregoing Verse; the first of which being a sort of *demure and formal Hypocrites*, who under *religious Pretences* shrouded the blackest Villanies; the second, a Company of *Atheistical Debauches*, who, to supercede the troublesome Obligations of their *Consciences*, and to obtain of themselves a free Dispensation to be wicked, denied the Existence of *Spirits* and the *Life to come*. The *Baptist*, upon their Address to be admitted to his *Baptism*, sharply reprehends them both under one common Name, *O Generation of Vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come!* and then he goes on, *Bring forth fruits meet for Repentance*. As much as if he should have said, “*O ye worst of men, ye brood of venomous Miscreants!* I perceive by your “ coming hither some body or other hath “ alarmed you with the *Forewarnings* of that “ dreadful *Vengeance* that is falling upon “ this Generation; and now to prevent it, you

“ you pretend *Repentance* of your Sins,  
“ because you have heard that I baptize  
“ with *Water* unto *Repentance*, you would  
“ needs assume this *outward Badge* of *Pe-*  
“ *nitents*. But I know you well enough,  
“ ye are a pack of arrant *Knaves* and *Hy-*  
“ *pocrites*, and *nowsoever* at present you  
“ may be frightened into a demure *Pretence*  
“ of *Repentance*, I know your *Hearts* are  
“ as *wicked* as ever, and that you will not  
“ part with one of those *Lasts* which ren-  
“ der you so *base* and *infamous*. And there-  
“ fore, for my part, till I have better *Hopes*  
“ of you, I am resolved I will have nothing  
“ to do with you. Go therefore, bring  
“ forth *fruits* meet for *repentance*; let me see  
“ by your *Actions* that you are *Penitents* in-  
“ deed, and then if you come I shall gladly  
“ receive you to this my *solemn Sacrament*  
“ of *Repentance*. This I take to be the most  
“ natural and *genuine Sense* of the *Words*, and  
I know but one *Objection* of any *weight*  
against it, that whereas this *Account* makes  
*John Baptist* to have refused them his *Bap-*  
*tism*, other *Texts* of *Scripture* seem to assert,  
that they *themselves* refused to be *baptised* of  
him, and they did not come to him under  
a *pretence* of *Repentance*, but upon a *Design*  
to *cavil* with him, and *expose* his *Baptism* to  
the *People*: for *Luke* 7. 30. it is said, that  
the *Pharisees* and *Lawyers* rejected the *counsel*  
of

of God against themselves, i. e. the Counsel which God, by *John the Baptist*, gave them; being not baptised of him; but what Counsel was it that they rejected? Was it the Counsel of being baptised? No such matter; for *John Baptist* never advised them to it, but the Counsel he gave them was to repent, and to bring forth fruits meet for *Repentance*. And this they rejected; for which they were not baptised of him. Not but that they would have been, if they could; for it is expressly said in the Verse foregoing my Text, that they came to *John's Baptism*, but *John* knowing their *Hypocrisy* would by no means admit them to it, till they had first brought forth such *Fruits* as were meet and proper for *Repentance*. In handling of which words, I shall endeavour these Three things:

1. To shew you what this *Repentance* is of which he exhorts them to bring forth the meet *Fruits*.
2. What the meet *Fruits* of this *Repentance* are.
3. The Necessity of bringing forth such *Fruits*.

1. What this *Repentance* is of which the *Baptist* here exhorts them to bring forth meet *Fruits*? To which I answer, briefly, that by *Repentance* we are to understand a sincere and thorough change of Mind, which as it hath been often observed, is the proper

per signification of *metanoia*, which is the word which the *New Testament* most commonly uses for *Repentance*. And then the *Mind* is *chang'd*, when the prevailing *Purpose* and *Resolution* of it is *altered*; when upon a due Consideration of the *Mischief*, *Indecency*, or *Inconvenience* of his *present Resolution*, a *Man* is effectually persuaded into a *contrary Purpose*, his *Mind*, we say, is *chang'd*; because he hath now a *contrary Judgment* of things, which form his *Will* into a *contrary Resolution*: and when once our *Mind* is thus *chang'd* as to any *Design* or *Course* of *Action* we are then said to *repent* of it. So that to *repent* of our *Sins*, is to be effectually *chang'd* and *alter'd* in our *Minds* concerning them, so as that whereas *before* we did in our *practical Judgment* prefer them at least *pro hic & nunc* before our *duty*, and in our *Will* *embrace* and resolutely *adhere* to them, we do *now* upon cool *Deliberation* pronounce them to be the *worst* of *Evils*, and as such do heartily *purpose* and *resolve* to *forsake* them. And in this consists the *Nature* and *Essence* of *Repentance*, viz. in a *firm Resolution* to *forsake* our *Sins* upon *cool* and *deliberate Judgment*. Where, by *Resolution* I do not mean a mere *Logical Conclusion* by way of *Inference* from *Premises*, that such or such a *thing* is *best* and *fittest* to be *done*; for in this there is no *Choice*, the *Proceedings* of our

our Reason being as necessary as those of our Sense; and where there is no *Choise*, there can be no *Virtue*. But the *Resolution* of *Repentanc* is an *Act* of the *Will*, viz. its *decretory* and *definitive Sentence* for the *actual Prosecution* of such a *Course* as upon *calm Deliberation* is proposed as that which is most *fit* and *necessary*. For suppose our *Reason* and *Sense* as two *Parties* pleading their respective *Causes* and *Interests*, the one for *Vertue*, and the other for *Vice*; and suppose that in the *Conclusion*, either the *Matter* be Left in *equilibrio* between them, or that *Reason* hath baffled *Sense*, and obtained a clear *Conviction* that the *Cause* of *Vertue* is infinitely *best* and most *preferable*; but that still the *Will* is in *suspence*, and hath not *peremptorily* decreed either one way or t'other; why hitherto all that hath been done is but mere *Speculation*, there is nothing of *Choice* in it, nothing of *Vertue*, nor consequently of *Repentance*. But when upon a *through hearing* of both *Parties*, the *Will* interposes its *Sovereignty*, and pronounces *Sentence* on *Reason* and *Vertue's* side, this is my *final Reselution*, and this by the Grace of God I will stand to, I will from henceforth *submit* to my *Duty*, how difficult soever it be, and *discharge* those base mischievous *Lusts* of mine what *Temptations* soever may assault me: when, I say, our *Will* with good

good Advice and with a full *Consent* hath pronounced this peremptory *Decree* and *Resolution*, our *Mind* is changed and our *Repentance* actually commenc'd. Thus the *Prodigal Son*, for instance, while he was considering with himself the happy State he was fallen from, *How many hired Servants of my Father have bread enough and to spare*, and the miserable Condition he was fallen into, *and I perish with hunger*, was only in the *Porch* and *Entry* of *Repentance*, and had he staid there and gone no farther, all this had been nothing but a dead *Speculation*, notwithstanding which he would have *perished* in his *Sin*. But when from hence he proceeded to that peremptory *Resolution*, *I will arise and go to my Father*, in that very Moment he became a sincere *Penitent*; and if in that instant he had been struck dead before ever he had taken one step towards his *Father*, he had dyed in a State of *Repentance*. For it is plain his *Mind* was changed, he had put off the *old man* and put on the *new*, he had formed a new *Judgment* and a new *Resolution*; and if he had immediately dyed, he had died in Subjection to God, and would have arose and gone to his *Father*, as he did while he lived. So that the precise Notion of *Repentance*, you see, consists in the Change of our *Mind*, that is, of our *Judgment* and *Resolution*: and hence it is

called *being renewed in the spirit of our Mind*, Ephes. iv 23. and *being transformed by the renewing of our Mind* Rom. xiii. 2. Consonantly to which, Hierocles, tho' an Heathen, thus defines *Repentance*, *πειλάρων αὐτὸν φιλοσοφίας απὸ πειλάρων, &c.* that is, *Repentance* is the beginning of *Philosophy*, 'tis a *renunciation of Evil Courses*, and a Preparation to a Life not to be repented of. So that when a Man hath repented, saith he, he neither quits *real* for *imaginary Goods*, nor chooses *Evil* for fear of *unfortunate Accidents*; but conforms his *Judgment* and submits his *Will* to the divine *Canons*. And thus you see what that *Repentance* is of which we are here bid to bring forth *meet Fruits*.

2. I Proceed in the next place to shew what those *Fruits* are which are *meet* for this *Repentance*. In general, they are such *Fruits* or *Works* as are natural and agreeable to such an *inward Change of Mind* and *Resolution* as *Repentance* imports, or such as may give a plain Demonstration that you are *effectually* convinced in your *Judgment* of the *Baseness* and *Malignity* of your past *sinful Courses*, and *sincerely* resolved to *discard* and *renounce* them for the future. For the *Fruits* of *Repentance* are nothing but the proper *Acts* and *Operations* of it, and 'tis then and then only that we bring forth these *Fruits*, when the *Effects* of a *real Repentance* do appear in our *Life* and

and *Conversation*, and our *Actions* do signify that our *Judgment* condemns our *Faults*, and our *Will* renounces them. And according to this account, the *Frauds* of *Repentance* may be reduced to these following Particulars.

1. An *actual* and *thorough* *Reformation*.
2. A *profound* *Humility* and *Self-Abasement*.
3. A *great* and *tender* *Modesty* in our *Expectation*.
4. *Candor* and *Gentleness* towards *others*.
5. *Simplicity* and *Integrity* of *Manner*s towards the *offended Party*.
6. *Caution* and *Wariness* for the future not to *offend again* in the same or the like Instances.

1. One necessary *Fruit* and *Effect* of our *Repentance* is an *actual* and *thorough* *Reformation*. If those invisible *Springs* of action the *Judgment* and the *Will* be changed and rectified, the *Wheels* of *Affection* and the *Hand* of *Practice* must necessarily move more *regularly* and *orderly*: For all our *inferior Powers* being subject to the *Authority* of the *Will*, and carried about with the swing of this *Primum Mobile*, this first great *Orb* of the *Soul*, do naturally apply themselves to the *Execution* of whatever *that* decrees, and resolves on; and to suppose a *Man's Judgment* and *Will* to be reformed when his *Life* is not, is to suppose that he

is not a *voluntary* Agent but a piece of *Clock-work*, that he is not determined in his Motions by *Choice* and *Deliberation*, but by *Weights* and *Plummets*, by necessary Pres-  
sures and Impulses; which Supposal not only strips him out of all capacity of *Repentance*, but also contradicts all *Experience*. For this we are as sensible of as we are of our Hunger and Thirst, that while we are our selves, and can *deliberate* and *chuse*, we do nothing but what we *will*, nothing but what we *judge* to be good *pro hic & nunc*, and nothing but what we *chuse* upon so *judging*. So that for a Man to pretend to be a *Penitent* in his *Heart* whilst he is *unreformed* in his *Life*, is to *lye* against his own *Experience*. He knows and feels that what he doth he doth *voluntarily*, with *Approbation* of *Judgment* and *Consent* of *Will*; and therefore if his *Actions* are bad, his *Judgment* and *Will* must be so too. You say you do *heartily* *repent* of your Sins, by which, if you understand what you say, you mean you do absolutely *condemn* them in your *Judgment*, and *peremptorily* *disclaim* them in your *Will*; but still you must confess you lead a *bad* *Life* and *persist* in many of those *sinful* Courses of which you hope you have *heartily* *repented*: which is as much as if you should say, I am fully resol-  
ved I will play the *Knafe* no more, but yet I must

I must confess I do *lye* and *cheat* as much as ever; I am peremptorily determined to be very *temperate* and *chaste*, but I must acknowledge I am very often *drunk*, and do very often *whore*; that is to say, you do what you won't do, you won't do what you do, your *Will* hath no Influence on your *Actions*, your *Actions* no relation to your *Will*, there is no Communication nor Inter-course between your Power of *chusing* and your Power of *acting*; so that as you cannot derive the Good that is in your *Will* to your *Practice*, so neither can you attribute the Evil that is in your *Practice* to your *Will*; all which is as false, and you know it is so, as any *Contradiction* in Nature. So that a thorough *Reformation* of Life, you see, is a necessary *Fruit* and *Effect* of *Repentance*, and you may as well suppose a *Sun* without *Light*, as *Repentance* without *Amendment*, if there be Time and Opportunity for it; for if a Man out-lives the *Change* of his *Mind*, there is not a more necessary *Connexion* between his *Life* and his *Motion*, than there is between the *Change* of his *Mind* and the *Reformation* of his *Manners*. And hence we find, that to *repent* and turn from our *evil* ways, to *repent* and do our *first* *Works*, to *repent* and be *converted*, to *repent* and turn to *God*, are in *Scripture* very often put together to denote the *inseparable*

Connexion that there is between them.

2. Another necessary Fruit and Effect of our *Repentance* is a profound *Humility* and *Self-Abasement*; for between *Pride* and *Repentance* there is as direct an Opposition, as between any *Vice* and *Vertue* whatsoever. To *repent* of a Fault is to be *ashamed* of it, to *condemn* and *abhor* ones self for it, to *hate* and *renounce* it as vile and abominable; and for a Man to do this, and at the same time to be highly opinionated of his own *Desert*, and plumed with glorious *Conceits* of *himself*, is impossible: such a *Sentie* of our own *Shame* and *Vileness* as is implied in a serious and hearty *Repentance*, can no more consist with a *haughty* Look, a *puffed* and *self-conceited* Mind, than Light with Darkness, or excessive Heat with bitter Cold. And upon this Account the *Baptist* might well upbraid the *Pharisees*, who were a *Sect* of the most *bloated* Monsters that appeared in *humane* Forms; and yet by offering themselves to his *Baptism* of *Repentance*, pretend to be true *Penitents*. *O ye proud Wretches, do you pretend to Repentance? you that have swelled your selves with Self-Conceit till ye are ready to burst again! you that are so full of your selves that you can never forbear overflowing with self Applause and Vain-glory! that like a company of Bladders are blown up with your own Breath, and swell and look big, and yet have nothing but*

but *Wind in you ! go, bring forth fruits meet for Repentance*; let me see you grow more humble, mean and prostrate in your own Opinions, and when by this Effect I am satisfied that you are Penitents indeed, I will readily admit you to this my Baptism of Repentance. And God knows, we have too many such *Pharisaical Pretenders to Repentance*, that under a *dejected Look*, a *solemn Face* and *whining Tone* do carry as *haughty self-conceited Minds* as the proudest *Pharisees* of them all; that having been affected a little with the Sense of their Sins, and cast down with the frightful Apprehensions of God's Wrath and Displeasure, or that having suffered the Terrors of the *Spleen*, and acted through a few *tragical Scenes of Melancholy, Fancy, and Passion*, are presently borne *aloft* out of the Spirit of Bondage, as they call it, with such towering and magnificent *Conceits* of their own *Sanctity* and *Goodness*, as causes them to look down with *Contempt* upon ordinary *Mortals*, to *despise* their *Superiors*, and *vilify* their *Betters*, and *separate* themselves into *Parties*, that *monopolize* all *Sanctity* and *Godliness* to themselves; which, whatsoever these Men may think, is doubtless a very dangerous *Symptom* of a rotten and diseased *Repentance*. For he that hath *truly* repented of his *Sins*, must necessarily have discovered *Cause* enough in them to *humble* and *abase*

himself in his own Eyes; and he that after such a Prospect of his own Baseness and Vileness as is necessary to Repentance, can upon the next Review applaud and admire himself, and grow fond and conceited of his own Excellencies, hath a Judgment with two Ends like a Prospective, with which he can lessen or magnify himself as oft as he pleases.

3. Another necessary Fruit of Repentance is Modesty. He that is so thoroughly sensible of a Fault as heartily to repent of it, will be thereby instructed to behave himself more modestly for the future. The Sense of his Fault will cool his Confidence, and render him more bashful and moderate in all his Pretensions and Expectations. Should I see a Company of Rebels, upon a Pretence of having repented of their Disloyalty, not only lay Claim to their Prince's Mercy, but presently fall foul upon his faithful Adherents, and call themselves his best and most loyal Subjects, and pretend to his greatest Favours and Rewards; I should certainly suspect that they had no sense of their Guilt, but that in their Hearts they were as very Rebels as ever. And thus, when upon pretence that having heartily repented of our Rebellions against God, we presently grow bold and confident, and begin to crow over those who were never involved in our Guilts, as a company of carnal and moral Wretches; when we are immediately

diately flushed with triumphant Assurances of God's Love, and our *Loyalty* to him, and nothing will serve our Turns but to be presently counted his *Darlings* and *Favourites*, it is a very ill sign that we were never yet truly ashamed of our *Rebellions*; that whatever we pretend, our *Wills* are as stubborn and disloyal as ever. And this was the true *Genius* of the *Pharisees* whom the *Baptist* doth here so severely reprehend; who being a proud and *conceited* Generation, as I shewed you before, made no doubt but God valued them at the same rate as *they* valued *themselves*; and tho' in reality they were a Pack of as ill-condition'd *Knaves* as ever walked demurely under the Cloak of *Religion*, tho' they were as *factious* and *turbulent*, as *covetous*, *griping* and *oppressive* as the *Devil* himself could make them, yet because forsooth they were *zealous* for their *Party*, and the Opinions of their *Sect*, and the little *Modes* and *Affectations* that distinguish'd them from other Men, they blew themselves up into as high a *Confidence* of God's Favour to them, as if they had been the most *Saintly* and *God-like* Souls in the World, and did so wholly ingross and *monopolize* the Kindness of Heaven to *themselves*, that they would scarce allow the least share of it to any of the *rest* of Mankind; notwithstanding which they pretended to be *Penitents*, and as such, it seems

seems would fain have been admitted to *John's Baptism*. But he, considering how *inconsistent* their *Humour* was to their *Prentence*, bids them go *bring forth fruits meet for Repentance*: As much as if he should have said, " You are a special sort of *Penitents* indeed! one would think by the *Confidence* of your *Talk* and *Behaviour*, you had no *Sins* to *repent* of: why you are the *godly Party*, the only *Favourites* of *Heaven*, and will allow none but your selves to pretend to the *Smiles* of *God's Countenance*. Go for shame; if you would be accounted *Penitents*, behave your selves as such, learn to be more modest, to live as becomes *Persons* that are deeply affected with their *Sins* and ashamed of their *GUILTS*, and then perhaps I may see cause to admit you to my *Baptism*. And certainly 'tis a very ill sign, when after a few *Pangs* of *Sorrow* and *Compunction* Men are Presently perking up into *Confidence* and *Assurance*; when they will needs be at the *Top* of the *Ladder* before ever they have touched the *lowermost Rounds*, and be gaping for secret *Incomes* and *Manifestations* of *God's Love* before they have manifested their *Repentance* by their *Obedience* to him. Sure if they were but as sensible of their *Guilt* as they ought to be, they would be contented to lie still a while with their *Mouths* in the

the Dust, and be satisfied that they are not *desperate* of being restored to God's Favour, but are admitted to *hope well*, that by God's Blessing on their *Endeavours* they shall at length arrive to such a state of *Goodness* as will intitle them to God's *Favour* and *eternal Life*. And such *Modesty* the *Sense* and *Shame* of their Guilt would teach them if it were such as is necessary to an *hearty* and *unfeigned* Repentance.

4. Another necessary Fruit of Repentance is *Candor* and *Gentleness* towards others. He that hath been so *affected* with the *sense* of his *own* Faults as heartily to *repent* of them, will not be very forward to *censure* and *condemn* the Faults of *others*: his Mind is so *oppressed* with the load of his *own* Sins, that he is not at leisure to find Fault with *other Men*; or if he were, yet deeply *conscious*, as he is, what *abundant* Reason he hath to find Fault with *himself*, that gags and silences him. His *own* Sins fly in his Face while he is censuring *other Mens*; while he is pertly exposing his *Neighbours* Fault, his *Conscience* twits him in the Teeth, and tells him, the *Devil* rebukes Sin, so that in his own *defence* he is forced to be *candid* and *favourable* to others, being *conscious* should he severely reflect upon *their* Faults, he should thereby libel and upbraid his *own*. And indeed, 'tis a certain sign that Men have

have little or no *Sense* of the Evil and Baseness of their *own* Sins, when they are so *forward* and *flippant* in animadverting upon *other* Mens. Should you hear a *deformed Wretch* exposing *another* Man for the *Blemishes* of his Nature, the *Disproportion* of his Parts, or the *Irregularity* of his Features, you would doubtless conclude that either he *imagin'd* himself to be very *handsom*, or *designed* to make a *Satyr* on his *own Ugliness*. And so when I hear Men that are great *Sinners* *themselves* briskly declaiming against the *Sins* of *others*, I cannot but conclude that either they *conceit* *themselves* to be *innocent*, or have a mind to expose their *own Guilt* and *Shame*; but to be sure, were they but as *sensible* of their *own* *Shame* as they ought to be, that would restrain them from throwing *Dirt* upon *others*. And doubtless it was upon this Consideration among others, that the *Baptist* doth here so tartly upbraid the *Pharisees*; who tho' they had rendred *themselves* by their *malignant Tempers* and *Practices* the greatest *Pests* and *Mischiefs* of *Society*, the most direct *Antipodes* to the *Nature* of *God*, and the *eternal Laws* of *Righteousness*, were yet the severest *Censurers* of *other Mens Actions* in the *World*. What tragical Clamours did they make against the *Publicans* and *Sinners* for playing the *Beast* while they *themselves* plaid the

the *Devil*? What base Interpretations did they make of the *holy* and *innocent* Freedoms of our *Saviour*, whom because he was not of their *sower* and *unsociable* Temper, they damned for a *Wine-bibber*, and a *Friend of Publicans and Sinners*? In a word, who was more forward than *they* to *emblazon* the Faults of *other* Men, to fetch and carry *scandalous* Reports, and shake their Heads at the Iniquities of the *Times*, when, God knows, they *themselves* were the greatest *Plagues* and *Scandals* of the Age they lived in? And with all this *Rancor* and *Bitterness* of Temper they would needs pretend to be *Penitents*; upon which the Baptist bids them bring forth such *Fruits* as were proper for *Penitents*. As if he should have said, “One  
“ may easily discern what *goodly* Penitents  
“ you are, how *deeply* you are affected with  
“ your *own* Sins by the Noise and Clamour  
“ you make against *other* Mens: you have  
“ Wickedness enough of your *own* to censure  
“ and make *Invectives* on, but while you  
“ should be looking *inwards*, your Eyes  
“ are in the *Ends of the Earth*, observing  
“ *other* Mens Faults and Miscarriages. Go,  
“ if you would appear to be Penitents,  
“ learn to be more *severe* upon your *selv*es.  
“ and more *candid* to *other* Men, to make  
“ the *worst* of your *own* Faults, and the  
“ *best* of your *Neighbours*; and then I shall  
“ have

“ have reason to hope that you are Penitents indeed. But 'tis fulsome *Hypocrisy* for Men to pretend to *Repentance* whilst they are bitterly *censorious* and apt to *judge* hardly of other Men. And to Men of understanding there is nothing can be more *ridiculous*, than to see one that is just fallen off from a *lude* and *disolute* Course of Life, presently set up for a *censor* of the *Age*, and with a *wife* and *serious* Forehead *animadverting* upon the Freedoms, and *declaiming* against the *Debaucheries* of this or t'other Man; which whatsoever he may think, is a plain Demonstration that he hath never been *duly affected* with the Sense of his own Sin, and that he is only *changing* one kind of *Wickedness* for another. For were he but *throughly* convinced how bad he hath been *himself*, he would be ashamed to *clamour*, and *inveigh* against other Men, and the great sense he would have of the *Beam* in his *own* Eye, would make him less apt to take notice of the *Mote* in his *Neighbours*.

5. Another necessary Fruit of *Repentance* is, *Simplicity* of Heart and *Integrity* of Manners towards the *Party* offended, for tho 'tis a *Maxim* in *Policy* not to *trust* to a *reconciled Enemy*, yet could I be secure of the *Sincerity* of his *Reconciliation*, I should have more reason to *trust* him than a *constant Friend*; because if he be *throughly* sensible that he hath *unjustly*

unjustly offended me and hath *heartily* repented of it, 'tis reasonably to be supposed that he will not only use me as a *Friend* for the future, but as a *Friend* whom he hath *injur'd* and unjustly *provoked*, and consequently that the sense of the *Injury* he hath done me, will make him *saperrogate* in Friendship, and by a *Superabundance* of good Offices, endeavour not only to *discharge* what the Laws of *Friendship* exact, but also to *expiate* the *unjust* Provocations he hath given me. For the very *Sense* of a past *Injury*, when it is *heartily* repented of, doth naturally kindle into a *cordial* Affection towards him whom we have *injured*: And thus, if we have *heartily* repented of our Sins against God, the *Sense* of what is *past* will render us more *sincere* and *cordial* to him for the *future*; and by how much the more we have *provoked* and *offended* him, by so much the more *studious* we shall be to *serve* and *obey* him. But if our pretended *Repentance* produces in us no other Effect but an *outward* Shew of *Obedience*, and renders us more *studious* to *appear* good then to be so; if it puts us upon *picking* and *chusing* our Duty, upon being *zealous* about *small* things to compensate our Negligence and *Remissness* about *great*, it is an infallible sign that it is *meerly pretended*, and that all the *Shews* we make of *Reconciliation* are nothing but *meer*

meer Vizors and Counterfeits. And such was the Temper and Disposition of the *Pharisees*, they took care to *disguise* themselves in a pompous *Form of Godliness*, and to carry a very demure and sanctified *Outside*. Their *Looks* were solemn, austere, and mortified, their *Tongues* all tipt with the *Language of Canaan*, their *Motions* and *Gestures* were artificially composed to the *Tune* of a humble and heavenly Mind. They *fasted* thrice a *Week*, and *prayed* so long that they made all the *Streets* ring again with their *loud and clamorous Devotions*, and gave *Alms* too now and then in a good *Eccbo* whence they might be sure to hear their *Charities* *resounded* after them in *Praises* and *Commendations*. They kept a mighty *Noise* about the *Fringes* and *Phylacteries*, the *external Circumstances* and *Appendages* of *Religion*, and were most zealous *Assertors* of *pure Ordinances* and *pure Worship*: but under all this *Formality* our *Saviour* tells them they were *whited Sepulchers*, who tho' they look *gloriously without*, are full of *Rottenness within*. For this demure *Outside* of theirs was only a *Disguise* under which they cheated and plaid the *Knaves* more securely. Their *long Prayers* were nothing but specious *Introductions* to their *Rapines* and *Oppressions*. Their *Alms* were their *Decoys* which they sent forth on purpose to train *simple* and *well-meaning* *People*

ple into their nets. Their zeale for the *Mint and Cummin* was the varnish of their *Fraud and Injustice*. Their *long Fasts* for *Reformation* were stirups to their *Ambition* of being uppermost, and their constant *Refreshments* after them were *Widows* and *Orphans* tears. In a word, they would cheat in faintly *Language*, play the *Knaves* with their Hands and Eyes lift up to *Heaven*, and while they seemed to be as *fervent* as *Angels* in their *Devotions*, they were as *false* and *treacherous* as *Devils* in their *Dealings*. And yet these *base* People would needs have been admitted for *Penitents* to the *Baptism* of *John*; who considering the *Inconsistency* of their Temper with their *Pretence* tartly upbraids them and bids them *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*; that is, learn to be more *simple* and *sincere* in their *Carriage* towards their offended *God*, study more to be *Penitents* than to *appear* such; contract your *Shew* into *Reality*, and let it appear by your *sincere Respect* to *God*, and *Devotion* to his *Service*, that you do *heartily* repent of your *Rebellions* against him. And certainly there can be nothing more *suspicious* than for a young *Penitent* to affect to make a great *Shew of Religion*; for true *Repentance* is naturally *bashful* and *modest*, it shuns the *Theater*, the tops of houses, and the corners of Streets, and is best pleased with *Silence*

M and

and Retirement; and provided God sees its Tears and hears its Sighs and holy Purposes, it desires no other Spectator or Auditor. For the great Design of a Penitent is to reconcile himself to God, and if he be but so sensible of his Sin as heartily to repent of it; by how much the more he hath offended him for the time past, by so much the more he will study to please him for the time to come.

6. And lastly, Another necessary Fruit of Repentance is Caution and Wariness for the future not to offend again in the same or the like Instances. For Repentance is a penal Duty in which a Man undergoes some degree of the smart and punishment of his Fault, in which he indures the Shame and Confusion of a guilty Mind, the Regrets and Remorses of an awaken'd Conscience; and the burnt Child, we say, will dread the Fire. He that hath undergone the severe Discipline of a deep and solemn Repentance will be sure to take warning by it; and be very cautious for the future not to approach those sins for which he hath smarted so severely. And hence we find that Repentance is not only expressed in Scripture by *μετάνοια* which signifies a Change of Mind, but also by *μεταμέλεια* which signifies an After-Care; which shews that though the Essence of Repentance consists in the *μετάνοια* or Change of our Mind, yet *μεταμέλεια*, or an After-Care to avoid those

those sins from which our Minds are changed and converted, is a necessary *Effect* and *Fruit of Repentance*; it being an usual *Figure* in *Scripture* to express *Causes* by their most natural and easie Effects. And indeed when I see Men boldly *approaching* and *venturing* towards those Vices of which they pretend to have *heartily* repented, I cannot but suspect that their *Repentance* is nothing but a *Pretence*, that 'twas only a present *Pet* and *Distaste* that they took against their sin upon some ungrateful *Accident*, or under a sudden *Qualm* of *Conscience*, and that it never proceeded so far as to a *cool* and *deliberate Change* of their *Judgment* and *Resolution* concerning it. For certainly had they undergone those *Lashes* of *Conscience*, those sharp and cutting *Reflections* that are usually necessary to *prepare* the way for such a *Change*, they could never be so foot-hardy as to *play upon the hole of the Asp* again, and to thrust their hands into the *den of the Cockatrice* after they have been so severely *stung* by it; and the Remembrance of those *Agonies* of *Soul*, those *Spasms* and *Convulsions* of *Conscience* which their sin hath already cost them, would make them *tremble* to think of it and be instead of a *Sea-mark* to forewarn and terrify them from approaching it again. But such was the humour of the *Pharisees*, that though they pretended to be *Penitents*, yet

when it served their *Cause* and *Interest* they were as bold and *venturous* at an evil *Action* as ever. . For so our *Saviour* long after this Reprehension of the *Baptist*, and consequently after this their pretence of *Repentance*, charges them with being as *intimate* and *familiar* with their *old Vices* as ever. It was their way indeed, and so it was always, to make their Religion a *Cloak* and *Pretence* for their *Wickedness*; but to serve their own *Faction*, which they called propagating the *Glory of God*, they esteemed nothing *unlawful*. And though in any point that was repugnant to the *Interest* of their *Sect* they were the most *nice* and *scrupulous* People in the *World*; yet to serve their *Cause* they could *lye* and *forswear* themselves with the help of a juggling Reserve or Distinction, as our *Saviour* observes of them *Math. xxiii. 16*. And no doubt but they could have taken *Oaths* and *Sacraments* too against their *Consciences* to keep their Places in the *Sanhedrim*, and there carry on their *factious* and *turbulent* Designs. It being therefore evident by their being so *venturous* upon *sinful Actions*, that their Pretence to *Repentance* was *false*, the *Baptist* dismisses them with this severe *Admonition*, *go bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*; i. e. let me see you more *wary* and *cautious* of running into those *sinful Courses* of which you now pretend to *repent*, and then

then I shall have some reason to believe that you are *Penitents* indeed. And certainly while a Man affects to draw near to his *old Sins*, and to dwell in the *Neighbourhood* of them, whilst he delights in their *Remembrance*, and loves to *sport* and *entertain* himself with their *phantastick Pleasures*, while he affects to dwell within *View* of their *Temptations*, to venture to the very *Edge* and *Brink* of them, to the very *utmost* *Limits* of *lawful* and *innocent*; it is a very ill sign that he never had that thorough Sense of their *Malignity* and *Danger* that is necessary to an hearty *Repentance*; for if he had, he would be *afraid* of all *Approaches* and *Tendencies* towards them, and be ready to *start* and *run away* not only from the *sins* themselves but even from their *Appearances* and *Resemblances*.

And thus I have endeavoured to give you an Account of the natural *Fruits* and *Effects* of true *Repentance*, by considering of which, and impartially consulting our own *Experience* of our selves, we may easily determine whether the *Repentance* we pretend to, if we pretend to any at all, be *true* or *false*. We live in an *Age* that doth so abound with all *sorts* and *degrees* of *Wickedness*, that a Man can hardly mention any kind of *Wickedness*, or *party* of wicked men that are branded for such either in *Sacred* or *Profane History*, but

it is presently suspected that his design is to reproach and expost some *Party* or other among our selves. And I confess if men will set themselves to *guessing* who is meant by the *Pharisees*, who by the *Sadducees*, they may find *Parallels* enough of both in this *degenerate Age*; and, God knows they go together too often now in pursuance of *worse Designs* than those *Sadducees* and *Pharisees* that came together to *John's Baptism*. But if any should ask me who or what *Party* of Men it is I reflect upon in these severe Representations I have made of *Pharisaical Pretenders to Repentance*, I can truly answer that I intend no *one Party* of whatsoever Denomination; there being among *all Parties* a great many that do not so much as pretend to *Repentance*, and among *most*, as I verily hope, a great many that do more then pretend to it. But the *Pharisees* whom I mean are those whom the *Baptist* and after him our *Saviour* himself do so smartly inveigh against; and if you please to consult St. *Mathew xxiii*, you will there find them treated with much *more Severity* by the *meekest* and *most charitable* Person that ever was. But if in any *Party* among our selves there be any such *Hypocrites* and *false Pretenders to Repentance* as these *Pharisees* were, as I doubt there are too many among *all Parties*, I must then ingenuously acknowledge that I mean *them* too.

And

And if any thing that hath been said should reflect upon and gall them, they ought to consider that that is their own Fault. They may avoid being Hypocrites, but we must not avoid declaiming against Hypocrisy, and when ever we do so, we must reflect upon them whether we will or no. If Men will be Hypocrites, our Saviour's Sermon as well as this will upbraid and expose them, and if it doth so, 'tis not his Fault but theirs who made themselves obnoxious to his Satyrs and Invectives. The only way for you to avoid the Edge of such Reflections is to become honest and sincere Penitents, but if you will not, you must thank your selves if it cuts and wounds you. For if our Saviour himself had stood this day in this Place, and preached over his Sermon to the Pharisees, it would have been impossible for you not to have been touched and concerned at it, and if you should be so disingenuous as to fall foul on me, as they did on him, I will only propose St. Pauls Quere to you, *Am I therefore become your Enemy, because I tell you the Truth?* and so I have done with the secong thing propoſed, which was to shew you what are the proper Fruits and Effects of Repentance.

3. I now proceed to the Third and last Argument, namely to shew the indispensable Necessity of bringing forth these Fruits, which I shall endeavour to make appear by these following Instances. M 4 i. That

1. That we should bring forth these *meet Fruits of Repentance* is necessary to the *Satisfaction of God*.
2. It is necessary to the *Satisfaction* of our own *Consciences*.
3. It is necessary to the *Obligation* of *Repentance*.
4. It is necessary to the *Perfection* of our *Natures*.

1. That we should bring forth these *meet Fruits of Repentance* is necessary to the *Satisfaction of God*. For though it be wholly owing to *Christ's Satisfaction*, that lost Sinners are admitted to a Possibility of *recovering* themselves by the *After-game of Repentance*, yet God we see hath declared, that *without our Repentance* he will not be *satisfyed*. Neither indeed doth *Christ's Satisfaction* extend to final *Impenitence*, it cancels *none* of our *GUILTS* but only those which we heartily *repent* of, but as to all the *rest* we are as accountable to the *Tribunal* of God as if he had *never* died for us. So that all the *Favour* which the *meritorious satisfaction* of our *Saviour* hath obtained for us is only this, that our *Repentance* shall be accepted instead of our *Punishment*, that is, that if we unfeignedly *repent* of our *sins*, we shall thereupon be set as *right* in the *sight* of *God* and in the *court* of *Heaven*, as if we had undergone the *utmost Rigor* of the *Law*. So that now our

*Repentance*

*Repentance* being accepted of by God instead of our *Punishment*, it is necessary that it should be such a *Repentance* as doth in some measure *answer* and *fulfil* the Ends of our *Punishment*. For since 'tis for *wise* and *good* Ends that God Punishes, it is not to be expected that he will accept of any *thing* in the stead of our *Punishment* which doth not in some measure *fulfil* and *accomplish* those Ends; and this no *Repentance* can do but that which produces the proper *Fruits* of *Repentance*. For the principal End of *Punishment* is either to amend the *Criminal* himself, or to warn *others* not to imitate his *Sins* by the Example of his *Sufferings*, which Ends can never be effected by our *Repentance* unless it produce in us the visible *Fruits* of *Amendment*. For suppose it possible that I should have *internally* repented, *i. e.* that my *Mind* should be really *chang'd*, that in my *Judgment* I should absolutely *condemn* my *sinful Courses*, and in my *Will* I should be *peremptorily* *resolved* against them, and no *actual* and *visible* *Reformation* should follow; if this I say were possible, it is plain my *Repentance* would be wholly *ineffectual* both as to my *own* *Amendment* and the *Amendment* of *others*. If indeed I actually *avoided* the *Sins* I *condemn* and am *resolved* against, my *Repentance* would *effect* the Ends of my *Punishment*, that is, it would make me a better

better Man, it would reform my Nature, rectify my Motions, and extinguish my bad Inclinations and corrupt Principles, and prove an effectual Means to reform others too ; who by the good Example of my Actions might be as Effectually wrought upon, as by the sad Example of my Sufferings. And God having thus obtained his Ends by my Repentance, there is very good reason why he should dispence with my Punishment. But if after I have condemned my Sin and resolved against it, neither my self nor other Men can be reform'd and amended by it, this Change of my Mind will have no influence on my Nature, it will never correct its disorderly Affections, nor subdue its wild and extravagant Inclinations ; but leave it altogether as vicious and degenerate as it found it. Neither will it have any good Influence upon others, because it doth not appear to them in any visible Effects. So that it is only by bringing forth its natural Fruits that our Repentance or Change of Mind servest the Ends of Gods Punishments, and 'tis unreasonable to expect that God should accept of our Repentance for our Punishment, when it doth not at all serve the purpose of our Punishment. For this would be to defeat himself, to countermine and baffle his own Intentions, and fondly to give up his wise and good Ends to the Obstinacy and Perverseness of his Creatures.

You

You would fain have God dispence with your Punishment ; well, but you ought to consider that there are very wise and good Ends that he drives at in Punishing you. Would you have him give up these Ends ? that is unreasonable, that is to desire him to acknowledge that his Ends are not worth aiming at. Why what is to be done then ? I will tell you what, you must give him his Ends by your *Repentance*, that is, by bringing forth such Fruits of *Repentance* as will effectually amend *you*, and contribute to amend others, and then you may be secure that God will be satisfied ; but if not, be assured he will prosecute his Ends by your *Punishment*, and take care to warn others by the sad example of your Sufferings, since you would not take care to warn them by the good example of your Actions.

2. That we should bring forth the meet Fruits of *Repentance* is also necessary to the Satisfaction of our *Consciences* ; for without such Fruits a Man can never be rationally satisfyed that his *Repentance* is real and sincere, for if we have made any Observation upon our selves, we cannot but be sensible of our own *Fickleness* and *Mutability*, how many Sorts of Men we are under our several *Circumstances*, how our *Mind* veers about upon every change of Wind, and into what contrary Tempers it is moulded upon contrary Chances

Chances and Contingencies. And having such an abundant Experience of our own *Inconsistency*, how can we rationally conclude upon every *Variation* of Temper, That this or that is our *fixt* Judgment or our *standing* Resolution; that the Mind we are now in will not Change upon the next Change of our *Circumstances*, and that when *contrary* Accidents occur we shall not take up *contrary* Resolutions; especially when our *Resolutions* do oppose our *Inclinations*, and our *Inclinations* are perpetually importuned and sollicited by outward *Objects* and *Temptations*; which is our Case in the matter of *Repentance*. In this case for Men to conclude from the *present* Bent and Inclination of their *Wills* that they are steadily *fix'd* and *determined* to good Resolutions is a piece of very unreasonable *Self-Assurance*; for when they know themselves to be so *fickle* and *inconstant* in matters to which their *Inclinations* are more *indifferent*, how much reason have they to suspect the Firmness of *those* Resolutions to which their *Inclinations* are so extreamly *averse*, and from which so many outward *Objects* are continually beckoning and inviting them? in this case therefore we have no other way to be rationally satisfied of the *Firmness* and *Stability* of the change of our Mind but only by the *Fruits* and *Effects* of it, for, if when it hath Opportunity, it doth

doth not pass forth into *Action*, and display it self upon our Lives in an answerable *Practice*, if it doth not ordinarily restrain us from those *Evils* it condemns and resolves against, and spur us on to those good things it approves and consents to, it is most certain it is a mere *Cheat* and *Imposture*. For let Men say what they please, it is impossible that any Man should live in those *vicious* Courses which they absolutely *condemn* and are sincerely *resolved* against; they may now and then quarrel at their sins and take *Pet* against them upon some little *Disappointment* or unhandsome *Accident*, and in the Heat of their *Distast* they may *condemn* and *renounce* them, but if when their *Passion* is allayed, they *resent* and *return* to them again, it is plain that their *Minds* were never changed, and that the *Current* of their *Judgment* and *Will* was only interrupted by a contrary *Gust*; but that it was never diverted into a *contrary* *Channel*. So that what our *Saviour* asserts of Men is as true of their *Repentance*, *the Tree is known by its Fruits*; if our *Repentance* be *genuine*, it will bring forth the *Fruit* of *Reformation*, but if it be *barren* or bring forth nothing but *Leaves* and good *Words* and *Professions*, it is certainly *Spurious* and *Hypocritical*. However therefore Men may juggle with and impose upon their *Consciences* with false *Shews* and *Semblances*, they can never

never hope to be rationally satisfied of the *Truth* of their *Repentance* till the natural *Fruits* and *Effects* of it appear in their *Lives* and *Conversations*.

3. That we should bring forth these meet *Fruits* of *Repentance*, is also necessary to satisfy the *Obligation* of *Repentance*: for *Repentance* is not required of us meerly for its *own* sake, but in order to the *Fruits* and *Effects* of it; and the Reason why God obliges us to this *Change* of our *Mind*, is, because it is a necessary Introduction to a thorough *Change* and *Reformation* of our *Manners*; and for a *Man* to condemn *Sin* in his *Judgment* meerly to *condemn* it, and *resolve* against it in his *Will*, meerly to *resolve* against it, is so far from being a *Virtue*, that it is a ridiculous *Impertinence*. And if we still *practise* what we *condemn*, and *do* what we *resolve* against, we are so far from answering the *Obligation* of *Repentance*, that we do but *inhance* and *aggravate* our *Impenitence*. For he that *doth* what he *condemns* sins against his *Knowledge* and flies in the face of his own *Convictions*, and he that *doth* what he *resolves* against, sins against his *Promise*, and basely *falsifies* his own *Engagements*. So that the meer *Change* of our *Mind*, you see, abstractedly considered, doth by no means answer the *Obligation* to *Repentance*, because the *Obligation* doth not terminate in it self, but

but is made with respect to the *natural Effects* of such a Change; and because this Change in it *self* is of no farther Use and Significancy in *Religion* than as it is pregnant with and productive of those *Effects*. For either the *Sin* which I condemn in my *Judgment* is such an *Evil* as I ought to *shun* and *avoid*, or it is not; if it be not, it is no *Virtue* for me to *condemn* that for an *Evil* which I need not take care to avoid; if it be, it is a *Folly* to *condemn* it, unless I also *avoid* it. And so again, either the *Duty* I consent to and resolve upon in my *Will* is necessary to be done, or it is not; if it be not, it is unnecessary for me to *resolve* to do it; if it be, it is in vain to *resolve* to do it unless I *perform* my *Resolution*. For as a *Cypher* which is only in order to a *Number* signifies nothing, unless a *Number* be added to it; so *Resolution*, which is only in order to *Action*, is perfectly insignificant, unless it be seconded with *Action*. And since it is nothing but the Necessity of *doing* what we resolve that can make it necessary for us to *resolve* to do it, we must either deny the Necessity even of our *resolving* to amend, or acknowledge the Necessity of our *actual Amendment*. So that that *inward Change* of our *Mind* which *Repentance* imports being required only in order to the *outward Change* of our *Manners*, it is impossible we should satisfy the

the Obligation of *Repentance* without bringing forth the *Fruits* of actual Amendment.

4. And lastly; That we should bring forth these *meet Fruits* of Repentance is also necessary to *accomplish* the great Work and Design of *Repentance*, which is to repair the *Decays and Ruins* of our Nature, and recover it from the *Diseases* it hath contracted by sinful Courses to a State of *Health* and *Perfection*. For *Repentances* suppose a *degeneracy* of our Nature, and the great Business and Design of it is to *raise* and *recover* us. And hence the *Prodigals* Repentance is called *coming to himself* Luke xv. 17. implying that before he was gone from himself, that he had abandoned his Reason by which he was constituted a *Man*, forsaken the *Guide* and leading *Principle* of his Nature, and was degenerated either into a *Beast* or a *Devil*, which is a very proper Description of the State of *Sinners*, who when they depart from *God* do depart from *themselves*, and run out of *Humanity* into *Bestiality* or *Devilishness*. For they do not govern themselves by *Reason* as Men should do, but by their *Passions* and *Appetites* as *Beasts* and *Devils* do; they turn a deaf Ear to the voice of their *Reason* and *Conscience*, and constantly chuse and refuse what their own black *Passions* or brutish Appetites direct them, and in the whole course of their Lives do act like upright

right *Beasts* or incarnate *Devils*. The proper business therefore of *Repentance* is to bring back these *Vagrants* to themselves, and restore them to their *Wits* and *Reason*, to rescue them out of the hands of *Paffion* and *Appetite*, and put them under the Power of *Reason* and *Conscience*, that so for the future they may live like themselves and as becomes *rational Beings* that are related to God and one another. This is the proper work of *Repentance*, which it can never effect without it bring forth its natural *Fruits*. For he that so repents of his *evil Courses*, as not to *correct* and *reform* them, how is it possible he should ever be the *better* for it, when he moves not a step forward from the *corrupt* and *degenerate* State of his nature, but only dances round in a Circle, and *sins* and *repents*, and *repents* and *sins*, and at last still returns to the same point. The only way to reform our *Nature* and *subject* its *Passions* and *Appetites* to its *Reason*, is to live *well*, and regulate our *Actions* by the *Laws* of *Reason* and *Righteousness*; by this we shall by degrees *tame* and *reduce* our irregular *Inclinations*, and *readvance* our *Reason* to its native *Throne* and *Dominion*: by forcing our selves, as we must do at first, to the *practice* of *Vertue* and *Religion*, we shall by degrees acquire *vertuous Dispositions*, and those will improve into *vertuous Habits*, and those in

the End will grow to *Perfection*. But if we only *condemn* our Sins and *resolve* against them, but do not actually *renounce* and *forsake* them; instead of *bettering* our Nature we shall more and more *debauch* and *deprave* it, and be still *declining* from bad to worse, and from worse to worse, till at last our Disease becomes *desperate* and *incurable*. So that it is indispensably necessary, you see, that we should bring forth *Fruits meet for Repentance*, because, unless we do, it is impossible our *Repentance* should ever *accomplish* the work it is designed for; that it should *heal* and *reform* our nature, *extinguish* its *vicious* Inclinations, and *adorn* it with those *Graces* wherein its *Beauty* and *Perfection* consists: and we were every whit as good *not* to repent at *all*, as to repent so as to be never the *better* for it. And now give me leave to conclude this Argument with a few Inferences.

1. From hence I infer what a *ridiculous* thing it is for Men to make a fond *Pretence* of *zeal* for *Religion*, while the direct *Contraries* to all the natural *Fruits of Repentance* do most visibly appear in their *Lives* and *Conversations*. I confess of all the offices that belong to a *Preacher*, I am naturally the most averse to that of *Reprehension*. I do not love to expose Mens *Faults*, and rake in their filthy *Dunghills*; and 'tis not only my *Charity* to

to Mankind but also the Indisposition of my Nature to find fault, that makes me so heartily wish, O would to God that Men were once so good as to need no Reprehension! that so we might have nothing to do but to praise and encourage them, to excite them to go on with the Comforts of Religion and the just Applauses and *Encomiums* of their *Vertues*. But alas we live in an *Age* that would make a Stone to speak, and force any Man of any *Conscience*, in despite of all the *Candor* and *Modesty* of his nature, to cry aloud against the fulsom *Hypocrisies* and *Impostures* that look through our most glorious Pretences to *Religion*. For, for God's sake Sirs, is it not a Shame, a burning Shame to hear a Company of professed *Atheists* and notorious *Knaves* set up for *Zealots* and *Reformers*, and raise a Clamour for *Liberty* of *Conscience*, and *pure Ordinances*? as for the sober and pious *Dissenters*, I can bear their mistakes with as much Tenderness and Compassion as any Man, and can make them as large *Allowances* as I could reasonably desire for my *self*, if I were in their Condition. But when I see Men rank themselves under the *Banners* of *Religion*, that live in open *Hostility* to its Commands and Precepts, that make no *Conscience* of blaspheming the Name of God, traducing his *Vicegerents* and *Representatives*, defaming and defrauding their *Neighbours*, and exposing

the most *Sacred* and *Serious* things to *Scorn* and *Derision*? I cannot but suspect that there is *Mischief* behind the *Curtain*, what zealous *Appearances* soever they may make upon the *Stage*. For it can never enter into my Head, and I wonder how it should into any *Bodies* else, that those *Men* should ever design well to *Religion*, whose *Principles* and *Practices* are so openly *irreligious*. They may pretend *Religion*, for that is so *venerable* a Name that 'twill serve to set a *fair Colour* upon the ugliest intentions; but tho' we may be deceived by a well disguised *Hypocrisy*, yet sure we can never believe that *Profaneness* is in earnest, when it pretends to be zealous for *Religion* and a through *Reformation*. O would to God that men would at last be so honest as to *appear* what they *are*, or at lealt not be so *ridiculous*, as to pretend the quite *contrary* to what they *appear*! it would make any honest heart bleed to see how *Religion*, how the *Protestant Religion* is rendred cheap and vile by the *impudent Pretences* which bad *Men* make to it; *Men* whose *Lives* are bad enough to disgrace *Popery* it self, and who are *Protestants* only because they are not *Popists*. In the name of God, Sirs, what have you to do with any *Religion*, and much more with the *Protestant*, which by its *pure* and *honest* *Principles* defies and renounces you, which *abominates* your designs and *dis-avows*

avows your Actions, and blushes to see how you Profane and Scandalize it by pretending Friendship to and Familiarity with it. For what will strangers think of it, that understand not its Principles, when they hear such as you claim such an intimate Acquaintance with it? how prone will they be to suspect that 'tis a Religion for your tooth, and that it *shelters* and *patronizes* you in all your *Wickedness*? wherefore for God's sake be at length so *just* to the Reputation of that Religion you pretend so much *zeal* for, as either to bring forth the *Fruits* of it by *living* up to its *Principles*, or not concern yourselves any farther about it. For this I am sure of, while such as you *pretend* to it, it loses much more by the *Disgrace* which your Lives do cast upon it, than ever it is like to *gain* by your *Zeal* and your *Clamour* for it.

2. Hence I also infer how extreamly *insufficient* that *Repentance* is, which the *Church of Rome* doth frankly approve and allow of; which is such as plainly *evacuates* and *supercedes* the *Necessity* of brining forth the natural *Fruits* of *Repentance*; as any one may easily apprehend that will but take the pains impartially to consider the *Chain* of that *Churches Principles*. For first the *Council of Trent* teaches that *Attrition*, which is nothing but a *Sorrow* for *Sin* proceeding from the

*Fear of Punishments*, doth dispose Men to receive *Grace* in the *Sacrament of Penance*, and that all the *Sacraments* of the *Gospel*, of which *Penance* is one, do actually confer grace upon those that are disposed for it. So that if he hath but the *Grace* to be afraid of *Hell* and to be sorry that he is in *Danger* of it, it is but *confessing* his *Sins* to a *Priest* and undergoing a short trifling *Penance*, and upon a few words of *Absolution* he shall presently be dubbed a true *Penitent*, and be as effectually instated in the *Favour* of *God* as if he had brought forth all the *Fruits* of *Repentance*. And this *Bellarmino* tells us is the current judgment of all their *Divines*; which if it be true, poor *Judas* had very ill luck to be damned; for according to this *Doctrine* he was thoroughly disposed for *Justification*, it being out of mere *Attrition* that he hanged himself; so that had he had but a *Priest* to have administered *Penance* and *Absolution* to him, that *Grace* that made him hang himself, would have intitled him to *Heaven*. 'Tis true indeed they tell us that there is a certain *Penance* which Men must undergo for their sins in *this Life* and that if they should not *perform* what is imposed upon them, or if what is imposed should not be *sufficient* to satisfy *Gods Justice*, they must be forced to *make it up* by their *Sufferings* in *Purgatory*. But even against *this* too that

*Church*

Church hath contrived an excellent Remedy, and that is the Treasury of the superabundant Merits of Christ and the Saints, of which at very reasonable Rates Men may purchase such a share, as will immediately pay off all their Purgatory scores, how great soever their present Sins, and how small soever their present Penances are. For out of this Treasury of Merit you may have Indulgence for a Hundred, a Thousand, or a Hundred Thousand Years; and if this will not satisfy, you may besides this have full Indulgence, fuller indulgence and fullest Indulgence, and 'tis impossible you should ever want Merit to keep your Soul out of Purgatory, if you have but Money and Hearts to pay for it. But if you should still be doubtful, you may secure all, if you please, by letting your self into an holy Confraternity; for if you will but turn Brother of St. Francis his Cord, you shall presently be intitled to such a stock of Indulgencies as all the Sins you can commit will never be able to out-spend. For at your first putting on this sacred Implement, you have as full and as effectual Pardon as was ever vouchsafed in the Sacrament of Baptism. And afterwards should you fall into mortal Sin, 'tis but taking so much Pains as to walk after the monthly Procession, and you shall have a plenary Indulgence which shall attend your holy Cord to the very Article

ticle of your *Death*, Besides which, you shall have your share in all the superabundant *Merits* of the *Saints*, of the *Order* of *Saint Roses*, and *Saint Clara's*, and *Saint Francis himself*, who by preaching to *Beasts* and teaching *Larks* and *Swallows* their *Catechism*, and *filly sheep* to bleat out their *Canonical Hours*, with sundry other such like holy *Feats*, could not fail to treasure up a vast stock of *Merits* in the common *Bank* of his *Fraternity*. Or if you would be surer yet, you may enter your self a *Brother* of the holy *Fraternity* of the 150 *Beads* of *St. Dominick*, where, for saying over 150 *Ave Maries* and 15 *Pater Nosters* in a week, you shall not only be allowed your *Dividend* of the superabundant *Merits* of all the *Saints* from *Adam*, and as many *Indulgencies* as you can possibly have occasion for your self; but such an overplus as will be sufficient to redeem 115 *Souls* yearly out of *Purgatory*. And it would be a very hard case if with all this *tackle* you should go to *Purgatory* your self. But if the worst come to the worst, it is but inrolling your self a *Brother* of *St. Simon's Scapular*, and then if you should go to *Purgatory*, the *Virgin Mary* hath ingaged her self, if *Pope John XXII.* doth not foully bely her, to come down to *Purgatory* every *Saturday* night, and pull up every *Soul* thence that hath worn this sacred *Vestment* into the holy

holy hill of eternal Life. And when a *Fryars Cord*, or *Rochet*, or *String of Beads* are such excellent tools for Men to work out their *Salvation* with, what need they trouble themselves to bring forth the *Fruits of Repentance*? had these things been only the *Conceits* of some *particular Members* of that *Church* I should not have mentioned them in this place, because to us they cannot but look extreamly *ridiculous*; but alas they are *Cheats* that have been founded and established on the *Bulls* of their *Popes*, avowed and contended for by their gravest *Doctors*, and reverenced and believed by the *devoutest Members* of their *Communion*. And how can they be obliged to bring forth the *Fruits of Repentance*, who are furnished with so many pretty *Devices* to get to *Heaven* without them?

3. And lastly, Hence therefore let us all be persuaded *heartily* to comply with this *Injunction*, and bring forth the natural *Fruits of Repentance*; first to form a *hearty* and *deliberate Resolution* against our *Sins*, and then to put it into *Execution* by forsaking all *ungodliness* and *worldly lusts*, and *living soberly* and *righteously* and *godly* in this present *World*. I do not deny but in this undertaking there are many times very great *Difficulties*, especially when we first enter upon it, when after a long *Course of Folly* we

we begin to reform; for then we must wrestle against our own Inclinations and struggle with inveterate Habits; and this perhaps will put us to a greater trial of our Courage and Constancy than we are now aware of. But if upon a due consideration of the Arguments on both sides we can but once persuade our selves to a through *Resolution of Amendment*, in all probability we have broke the heart of the main Difficulty of Repentance. It is I confess a hard thing for a Man to persuade himself against all his Habits and Inclinations, to resolve without any reserve in Cold and Deliberate thoughts upon an universal Reformation, at once to resolve to bid adieu for ever to all his darling Lusts and their appendant Plesures. This, as our Saviour describes it, is like the cutting off of a right Hand and the plucking out of a right Eye; and therefore must doubtless be attended with vehement Strugglings and Reluctances; but when this is done, the sharpest Pang of our Repentance is over; and if now we do not wilfully miscarry, these our bitter Throws like the Virgin Mother's, will soon conclude in Songs and Magnificats. For by arming a firm Resolution against them, we have already broken the main strength of our Lusts, so that now we have nothing to do but to pursue our Victory; and if we have but the Courage to keep the ground we have gotten, and to stand

stand firm to our *Resolution* that so our conquered *Foe* may not be able to *rally* and reinforce himself against us; we shall soon be crowned with the Joys of a *Victory* that will lead us into an *everlasting Triumph*. For our evil *Habits*, being for a while kept under a *constant and severe Restraint*, will by degrees *decay* and *languish*, and at last *expire*; and then the Trouble of *contending* will be over, and all our consequent *Religion* will be *Sweet*, and *Natural*, and *Easy*; and we shall reap far more *Pleasure* and *Delight* from it than ever we did from the most *jolly* Course of *Sinning*. For besides that a *Religious Life* is in its self more agreeable to our *rational Faculties*, and consequently more grateful unto *Human Nature*, whose *noblest Pleasures* do result from the exercise of her *highest Faculties*, and whose *highest Faculties* are never so vigorously exercised as within the sphere of a *Religious Life*: Besides which I say we shall therein find an unspeakable Satisfaction of *Mind*, and such a Calm of *Conscience*, and such ravishing *Joys* and *Delights* springing out of our sense of the *Love of God* and our hopes of a blessed *Immortality* hereafter, as will abundantly compensate all our *Labours* past, and render them not only *tolerable* but *delightsom*. For how can I think any Pains *intolerable*, the Endurance whereof will create a *constant Harmony within me*, will

will Crown me with the *Applause* of my *own* Mind, will indear me to the *Fountain* of all *Love* and *Goodness*, and entertain me with the Hopes of being as *happy* after a few moments as all the Joys of an *everlasting Heaven* can make me? But I beezech you to consider, is it not much easier to indure the *Agonies* of a bitter *Repentance*, than the horrid *Despair* of a damned *Ghost*? to thwart a foolish and unreasonable *Lust*, than to roar forever upon the Rack of a self-condemning *Conscience*? if it be so *grievous* to us to contend with an evil *habit* and struggle a while with a stiff and obstinate *Inclination*, to resolve and strive and watch and pray against them, *Lord, how grievous* will it be to dwell with *everlasting Burnings*, and to endure the dire Effects of thy *unquenchable Fury* forever? and yet one of these must certainly be endured, for between them there is no *medium*. Wherefore seeing we are under such an *absolute Necessity* of enduring *Hell* or the Difficulties of *Repentance*, in the Name of God let us but *act like Men*, and of the two chuse that which is most *tolerable*, and then I am sure we shall follow the counsel of the *Text*, and bring forth *Fruits meet for Repentance*.

MATTH.

## MATTHEW XXV. 10. last part.

*And the Door was shut.*

THESE Words are the close of the *Parable of the ten-Virgins*, whom our *Saviour* distributes into five *Wise* and five *Foolish*, and by them he represents the *different Carriage* and *Fate* of Men both *good* and *bad*. For the better understanding of which *Parable* you must know that our *Saviour* borrowed this, as well as sundry others, from the *Jewish Doctors*, of which our learned *Sheringham* in his *Preface* of his *Translation* of the *Joma* hath given us sundry Instances; of which this is one, which to this purpose he transcribes out of the *Gemara Babylonica*; *Rab. Eliezer* said, *be sure thou repent the day before thou diest*. Upon which his *Disciples* asked him whether a *Man* might know that hour of his death; whereunto he answers, *let a Man therefore repent every day, because he knows not when he shall die*. Upon which *Rab. Jochanan* proposes this *Parable*; a certain rich *Man* prepared a *Marriage Feast*, to which he called his *Servants*, but did not tell them the distinct time when this *Feast* should be: of these *Servants* some were *wise*, and

and some *foolish*; the *wise* cloathed themselves splendidly, and sitting before their Masters house thus thought with themselves, all things are here prepared, and nothing is wanting; wherefore since we are *uncertain* what hour we shall be called, we will *wait*, that so whensoever he calls us, we may be ready to atend. But the *foolish* sleepy Servants loitered away their time, concluding thus with themselves; we need not be *over-hasty* in making our selves *ready* it being yet a great while before we are like to be called. But on a suddain the *Master* calls them all to the *Supper*; upon which the *Wise* appeared before him *ready* to attend, but the *Foolish* being *unready* would fain have gone away to *dress* themselves; but the *King* rejoicing for those who were *ready*, and being very angry with those that *slept*, said, you who are *ready* shall sit down, and Eat and Drink and Rejoyce; whilst you that *slept* shall be shut out of Door; for so saith the *Lord*, behold my *Servants* shall eat, but you shall hunger, my *Servants* shall drink, but you shall thirst. This is the *Jewish Parable*, which for substance being so exactly agreeable with our *Saviours*, we may very reasonably conclude that his was only a *Copy* of that *Original*; and since the *Design* of it is evidently to shew the Danger of *delaying* *Repentance* to the last, we may fairly suppose

pose the *Design* of our *Saviour* to be so too. For by the *Wise* and *Foolish* Virgins here, our *Saviour* plainly means *good* and *bad* Christians, and by the *Marriage feast*, that state of *Happiness* which he hath prepared for the *good*. By their going forth to meet the *Bridegroom* is meant their expectation of Christ's *Coming*, either to their *particular*, or to the *general* Judgment. By their *Lamps* in their hands *Expositors* generally understand their *visible* profession of *Christianity*. By the *Oil* that made those *Lamps* to *shine*, is meant *Charity* and *good Works*, which are the *Fruits* of a *sincere* *Repentance*, and the *glory* and *lustre* of our *Christian* *Profession*. And as for the *Wise* who by *sincere* *Repentance* had prepared themselves for this *feast* of heavenly *Happiness*, they are admitted into it; but as for the *Foolish* that had put off all to the last, though they beftirr'd themselves very vigorously in this *bad* *Extremity*, yet all was to no purpose; for when they came to ask admittance into *Heaven*, the *Door* was shut against them, and they are dismissed with this bitter *farewell*, *Verily I say unto you, I know you not*. So that the *Design* of the *Words* is plainly to represent the *bad* *Catastrophe* of a *late* *Repentance*, which tho' it may be very active and vigorous when things are reduced to the *last* *extremity*, yet proves most commonly ineffectual,

al, and finds the *Door of Heaven* shut against it.

That therefore which I design from these Words is this, to explain and state what is the effect of a *Death-bed* Repentance, by which I mean such a *Repentance* as after a long Course of *Wickedness* begins upon the very near and sensible Approach, either of a *natural* or *violent* Death, such as is put off till Death is at the Door, and Men perceive themselves to be departing hence, and going away into *Eternity*. For as for that *Repentance* which is begun in *Health*, when Death is not in *View*, and Men are in the midst of *Temptations* to the contrary, it is much more free and ingenuous than that of a *Death-bed* can be supposed; and consequently though it should be stopped in its progress by a *sudden* unexpected Death, yet there is much more hope of it: and that which begins also in a *long* *lingring* *Sickness*, though it be not so free as the former, and therefore not so hopeful, yet is there much more hope of it than of that which begins in more *acute* Diseases, to which Death more suddenly follows; because it hath much more time to grow in, and to finish and compleat it self by. That *late* or *Death-bed* *Repentance* therefore concerning which we are now inquiring, must be such a *Repentance* as begins in the prospect of a *near-approaching*

approaching Death, and to which that Death doth very suddenly follow. Concerning which I shall enquire these three things.

1. How far it is possible for such a Repentance to be *effectual*.

2. How extreamly hazardous it is whether it ever *actually* prove *effectual* to our *Happiness* or no.

3. If it should prove so, yet how impossible it is in an *ordinary* way for us to attain any comfortable *Assurance* of it.

1. How far it is possible for such a Repentance to be *effectual*. And here I dare not pronounce it to be *absolutely* and *universally* Ineffectual, though I confess I am horribly afraid that it very rarely proves otherwise. For the Repentance on which *Salvation* is entailed necessarily includes a through *Change of Soul*, that is, a *new* prevailing *Judgment* and *Resolution*; and for certain wheresoever this really is there is *true* Repentance. For the very Life of Repentance consists in the universal *Subjection* of our *Souls* to God, and this *Subjection* consists in such a firm *Resolution* of *Soul* to obey him, as, whensoever occasion is offered, will render us *actually* *obedient*. I know there are some who place this *Subjection* of our *Souls* to God in an universal *Habit* of *Obedience*, but surely they do not consider that an *Habit* of *Obedience*, which consists in an *inherent Apt-*

ness and Faculty of obeying, is not attainable under a long progress in Religion, and that in our first Entrance into the Religious State we are so far from being *habituated* to obey God, that we generally obey with a great deal of *Difficulty*; and while we do so, 'tis a Contradiction to say that we are *habituated* to Obedience. So that by placing the Soul's Subjection to God in such a *Habit*, we undermine the comfort of all *Beginners* in Religion, and exclude all those from being faithful Servants who have not conquered the *Difficulties* of obeying. And therefore I think it much more safe to place our first *Subjection* to God in a *hearty Resolution* of obeying; for as *Choice* and *Resolution* is the principle of all our *voluntary Actions*, so it is of our *Subjection* to God; which being a *moral Action* must be *voluntary*, and so begin in *Choice* or *Resolution*, from whence if it hath opportunity it will proceed into *Action*, and that being often repeated will gradually improve into an *Habit*, and so in time render it *natural* and *easy* to us. But if Death should intervene and deprive the Man who is thus sincerely *resolved* on all opportunities of *Actual Obedience*, that being accidental makes no change in his *main State*, the *Frame* and *Temper* of his *Soul* remains the same, it goes into *Eternity* a faithful Subject to God, and had it continued longer here

here would have expressed its *Subjection* in all the necessary Acts of *Homage* and *Obedience*. And far be it from us to imagine the condition of such a *Soul* to be desperate, for though it is true that a *holy Life* is the indispensable Condition of *Salvation*, yet it is also true that a *holy Life* is necessarily included in this *Subjection* of our *Souls* to God. That *Man* doth live a *holy Life* who sincerely submits his *Soul* to God, and is firmly resolved, as occasion offers, to express his *Submission* in all the *external Acts* of *Homage* and *Obedience*. 'Tis true the *Death-bed Penitent* hath not opportunity to exercise himself in all the parts of *Obedience*; he cannot practise *Chastity* and *Temperance*, nor any other *Vertue*, to whose contrary *Vice* his *Sickness* hath utterly disabled him; but what of that? neither hath the *healthful Penitent* always opportunity to practise every *Vertue* which God enjoyns: if he be *poor* or *single*, he can no more give *Alms*, or provide for his *Children*, than the *sick Man* can be *Chaste* or *Temperate*, and yet he lives a *holy Life*, I hope, though he hath no occasion or opportunity to practise either of these *Duties*. Why then may not the *sick penitent* that practises his *Duty* so far as he hath opportunity, that heartily mourns for his *sin*, and patiently submits to Gods correction, that practises *Humility* and *Devotion*, is charitable

in forgiving Offences, just in making *Resti-tution* for Injuries; why may not such a one be as well said to live a *holy Life*, when he doth all this out of a hearty *Subjection* of his *Soul* to God, though he should have no opportunity to practise some other *Vertues*. For he who is sincerely resolved to submit to the *Laws* of *Temperance* and *Chastity*, is chaste and temperate though he never have opportunity to practise them, and all the difference between him and one that lives to practise what he resolves is only this, that the *latter* will practise it, and the *former* would; and in Gods account, who sees the *Issues* of all our *Resolutions*, he is as really *temperate* who would be so if he had opportunity, as he who is so when he hath: so that though *his Repentance* be not strictly the same with the *others*, yet it being to the same purpose, we cannot imagine that the good God will *damn* him only for a *puntilio*. If therefore it be possible for the *Death-bed* Penitent to reduce himself to a firm, prevailing *Resolution* of obeying God, I see no reason to conclude his *Condition* to be *absolutely* desperate; for being so resolved, he is a *holy Man*, though very imperfectly I confess; and if he go into *Eternity* with that *Resolution* with him, that will dispose him for some degree of *Happiness*. For if *his Resolution* be such as would have prevailed

ed if he had continued in *this* Life, it will as well prevail in the *other*; and if it so prevail there as to render him actually obedient, it will by necessary consequence render him in some measure a *happy* and *blessed Spirit*; Obedience to God being as natural a Cause of *Happiness*, as the *Sun* is of *Light*, or the *Fire* of *Heat* and *Burning*. All the Difficulty therefore is this, not whether God will accept of such a *Resolution*, as whether a *Death-bed* Repentance can be so far improved as to rise to such a *Resolution*. And here I must needs confess, and shall hereafter make it evident, that the Difficulty of perfecting such a Repentance into such a *Resolution* is so exceeding great, that it is the greatest *madness* in the World for any Man to promise himself *success* before hand whilst he is in *Health*, and hath so many better opportunities of Repentance in his hand. But that it is absolutely impossible I dare not say for these following Reasons:

1. Because *de facto* we sometimes find that the *Resolutions* of a *sick Bed* have proved effectual. We know there have been some Men who in a *Fit* of *Sickness* when they have looked on themselves as *abandoned* of all Hopes, have yet betaken themselves to *serious Resolutions*, which when they have recovered to their former *Health*, have visibly proved effectual, I confess these *Sick-bed*

*bed Resolutions* do most commonly die when the Man recovers, and he usually leaves his *Bed* and *his good purposes* together: but since there are some Instances wherein they have held and proved effectual, that is sufficient to *demonstrate* the Possibility of the Thing: for what hath been, may be; and what reason can be given why *some* Men may not perform in *Eternity* what they promised on their *Death-beds*, as well as *others* do after their Recovery what they promised on their *Sick-beds*? As therefore the *Relapse* of most Men from their *Sick-bed* purposes proves it extreamly hard, so the continuance of others stedfast to them proves it possible for such Purposes to be sincere.

2. Another thing that proves it possible is this, that upon a *Death-bed* oft times the *Arguments of Repentance* have a more immediate Access to the *Minds of Men* than at any other time, and consequently may be well supposed to be much more effectual and operative. Now the *Promises and Threats of Religion* will strike more immediately on the *Soul*, the *Goods and Evils* which they propose and denounce being nearer at hand, and the *Soul* perceiving her self within a *moment* of enjoying the one or suffering the other for ever; and that thick *Fog of earthly Cares and Pleasures* that interrupted her Prospect into the *other World* being in a great

great measure dispelled and scattered, <sup>199. 17</sup> The lies more open and uncovered to the Things of *Eternity*: and therefore as one thing strikes upon another with a *natural Effect*, as *Light* strikes upon the *Eye*, and *Sound* upon the *Ear*; so *eternal Things* do upon ~~in-~~<sup>199. 17</sup> mortal *Spirits* when there is nothing between to intercept the Stroke, and make most deep and vigorous Impressions on them. And when *Heaven* and *Hell* are so near the *Soul* that she expects almost every moment to expire into the *one* or the *other*, who can tell what strange and sudden Alterations they may make in her *Temper* and *Resolutions*; So that though I must confess it is a stupendous Effect for a *Soul* to be changed in the short *Twinkling* of a *Death bed* *Repentance*, yet when I consider the mighty *Influence* which the arguments of *Religion* may then be reasonably supposed to have upon her, I dare not say 'tis *absolutely* impossible; especially considering,

3. And lastly, That how impossible soever it may be to *humane Power*, yet 'tis not impossible to the *Grace* of God. 'Tis true indeed, God ordinarily vouchsafes his Grace to Men proportionably to their improvement of it; and I confess if he proceeds by this Rule with the *dying Penitent*, he hath less Reason to expect God's Grace now than in any former *Period* of his Life. But yet

we see the Grace of God doth not always proceed by *stated Rules* and Proportions, for sometimes God hath given the *largest* Measures of his Grace to those who have made the *least* Improvements of it: sometimes *very great* Sinners have been stopped in their wicked Courses when they least expected it, and turned back by a Grace that was almost *irresistible*; and tho' this be more ordinary than other Miracles are, so that Men may as reasonably *imagine* themselves, and depend upon God to feed them by Miracle, as *put* off their Repentance to the last in expectation of having their *Souls* renewed and changed by such a *miraculous Grace*; yet who knows but when the poor *dying* Penitent, under the mighty *Hopes* and *Fears* of *Eternity*, is strugling might and main for his *Soul*, to rescue it from *endless Misery*; who knows, I say, but the *good God* may sometimes, and in some *peculiar Cases*, take pity upon him, and by a more than ordinary Grace concur with his *Endeavours*, and render them successful. 'Tis, I confess, a *sad* State when things are brought to this Extremity that he has nothing but *this* to depend on; but yet since the Grace of God is not confined to do *thus* or *thus*, and no otherwise; but may, when it pleases, transgres the ordinary *Methods* of its Procedure, I dare not pronounce the State of those *Death-*

Death-bed penitents wholly desperate, who heartily implore the *divine Assistance*, and exert their utmost Strength, and use all means within their Power to *change* the wicked Temper of their Minds. For God may hear and pity them if he please, and if he will, there is no doubt but his own Grace *concurring* with their Endeavours can produce this *happy Effect* how great and difficult soever it may be. All that can be said therefore in the Case is this, that an *internal Change* of *Soul* from a State of Disobedience to a State of *universal Subjection* to God, is *indispesibly necessary* to *Salvation*; that such a *Change* is possible to the *Death-bed Penitent*, and so consequently is the *Salvation* which depends upon it. But alas, 'tis *barely* possible, so barely possible, that while I am in my Wits I think I should hardly venture on it for a thousand Worlds. Which brings me to

2. The next Thing proposed, which was to shew you how fearfully *hazardous* it is, whether a *Man* that *begins* his Religion on his *Death-bed* can actually arrive to that degree of *Repentance* as is necessary to his *future Happiness*. And this will plainly appear if we consider,

1. The great *Difficulty* of the thing it self.

2. The *Impotency* and *Indisposition* of him that is to perform it.

3. The

3. The little Reason he hath to expect any extraordinary *Aid* and *Assistance* from God.

1. It is extreamly *hazardous*, because of the great *Difficulty* of the Thing it self. We find by Experience, that after a long *Course* of *Sin*, 'tis one of the most *difficult* Things in the *World* for a *Man* to reduce himself to a *thorough* *Resolution* of *Amendment*; for *Custom* of *sinning* begets *sinful Habits*, and *sinful Habits* are a *second Nature* to us. So that for a *Man* to resolve upon a *holy Life* after he hath been long *habituated* to the contrary, is to resolve to make *War* with himself, and to *Live* in *open Hostility* with the *Inclinations* of his own *nature*; and thus to resolve against the *Grain*, and *incline* himself against his own *Inclinations*, is one of the greatest *Acts* of *Violence* that a *Man* can offer to himself. 'Tis true, in a sudden *Heat* and *Transport* it is an easie matter for a *Man* to resolve upon any thing when he is in a *Pet* against his *Sins*, or his *Mind* is *chafed* into a *religious Temper*; but, alas! these *inconsiderate* purposes are generally the greatest *Cheats* in the *World*, for they rarely, if ever, work any *Alteration* in the *Soul*; for though now the *Man* be in a *Pet* against his *Sins*, yet his *Judgment* of them is the same, and that is the *Principle* of his *standing Resolutions*. Men are often

*angry*

angry with their best Friends, and while the Passion continues, they can easily resolve to discard them for ever; but notwithstanding they do so, yet they are Friends still, and love them heartily, though at present they do not perceive it: and as soon as their Passion is over, their Love will return, and immediately *cancel* all their Resolutions against them. And so it is with these *passionate* Resolutions Men make against their Sins which work no Change at all in the standing Temper and Disposition of their Souls and are so far from curing them, that they are only the *Intermissions* of their Disease; and though at present they are angry with their Sins, and do purpose never to be *reconciled* to them more, yet still they love them heartily though they perceive it not, and as soon as their Passion is over, their Love returns and reverses their Purpose; and so these Fallings out of Lovers end in the *Renovation* of Love: so that these *rash* and *hasty* Resolutions are so far from being *hearty* Submissions unto God, that they only make a *Truce* with him to fetch Breath and *recruit* for a farther *Rebellion*. And thus to resolve, is, I confess, the easiest thing in the World; but for an old Sinner to enter into a *serious* Resolution of amendment in the midst of *cool* and *deliberate* Thoughts, when his Sins are about him entertaining him with the *fresh* Remembrances

brance of those *dear* Pleasures they were wont to invite him to; when he is or supposes himself to be *invir'on'd* with Temptation, and importuned on every side with all those *soft* Allurements that are so sweet and grateful to him; this, doubtless, is such a Task as will exact his utmost *Industry* and *Consideration*. For now he will meet with such *Oppositions* from his Appetites, such *Shrinkings* and *Recoilings* from his Will, such *Struglings* and *Putbacks* from his *darling Lusts*, as will even distract his *Soul*, and interpose a thousand Impediments to hinder him from coming to a *thorough Resolution*. So that unless he be *armed* with great *Consideration*, *animated* with *invincible Courage*, and *aided* by a *mighty Grace*, after all his *Deliberation* he will either not resolve at all, or, which is almost as bad, resolve with *Reserves* and *Exceptions*. Since therefore to form a *hearty* and *thorough Resolution* of Amendment is so extreamly hard and difficult, what a *fearful Hazard* must that *Man* run that remits it to a *dying Hour*. For how can we hope to accomplish so *great* a work in so *short* a Time? when we *crowd* up a Duty of so *vast* a Bulk, in so *narrow* a Room, in how much Danger must it be of being *strangled* in the Birth for want of Time and Air to *breath* in? I dare not say it is absolutely impossible in so *short* a Time to make a *through*

through Change in our Temper and Resolution; but sure I am it is so extreamly difficult, that 'tis the greatest *Hazard* in the World whether we actually perform it, especially considering.

2. The great *Impotency* and *Indisposition* of *Death-bed* Penitents to perform it. By what hath been said of the Difficulty of it, you plainly perceive that to the performance of it there is required *vast* Industry, *great* Consideration, and *earnest* Strivings and Contests with our selves; but alas! how unable and unfit is a Man for these things when he lies languishing on a *Death-bed*? when commonly the sickness he languishes under is either such as wholly *disables*, or extreamly *weakens* and *impairs* his Reason; so that either he is wholly incapable of such Reflections and Considerations as are necessary to a *thorough* Resolution of Amendment, or at least is very unfit for them. Now in this sad Extremity what can the poor Wretch do? His *sinful* Soul sits *drowzing* on the very *Brinks* of a dismal *Eternity*, and *Deaths* cold hand is thrusting it *headlong* down; so that if *She* doth not presently *rouze* and *start* up and *run* away from her Danger, within a very few *moments* she will awake in *everlasting* *Flames*. But alas! how should *she* *rouze* her self out of those *fatal* *Slumbers* when she hath scarce Reason enough to reflect upon her

her Danger or to take any Notice of that fearful Precipice before her; when by the distemper of her *bodily Organs* She is so *stun'd* and *stupified* that she can neither discern where She is, nor whither She is going? But suppose his Sickness be such as leaves him the free Use of his Reason, yet considering how much he must needs be distracted by *Pain* and *Uneasiness*, by *Weakness* and *Languishment*, by the *Cares* of settling his Affairs in this World, and the *frightful Prospect* that he hath of *another*, it will be impossible for him, without a mighty Assistance from above, to *range* his *scattered* and *unweildy* Thoughts into such *sober* Reflections and *serious* Considerations as are necessary to the forming of a *thorough* Resolution of Amendment; for such a Resolution can never be formed in a *hurry* of Paffion, but must be the Result of *calm* and *composed* Deliberations. For, as I shewed you before, hasty and passionate Resolutions work no *Change* upon the Soul, and till a Man hath made a *new* Judgment of Things, it will be in vain for him to make any *new* Resolutions; because 'tis impossible that any Resolution should be lasting that is not founded in the Judgment. But what Capacity can a Man be in to make a *new* Judgment of things in the midst of the *incessant* Hurries and Distracti&ons of a *Death-bed*, when he cannot consider

consider a quarter of an hour together, but is interrupted almost every *moment* by a thousand Accidents and Avocations? So that to refer our Repentance to a *Death-bed* is the same thing as to retire into a *Battle* to meditate, or to set up a *Closet* to study *Philosophy* in the *Head Quarters* of an *Army*, where a Man is as capable of free and undisturbed *Contemplations* as Men usually are of forming thorough Resolutions of Amendment when they are dying; which, without an *extraordinary Assistance* from God, being utterly impossible, must needs be extreamly *hazardous*; considering,

3. And lastly, the little Reason such a Man hath to expect any *extraordinary Assistance* from God. When a Man hath slighted all Gods *Invitations* to Repentance, and wilfully turned a *deaf Ear* to all the *secret Whispers* and *Importunities* of his *blessed Spirit*, when he hath all his Life-time rejected the Motions and Tenders of his *Grace* upon this resolution that he would sin on as long as he was able, and never repent till he could sin no longer; with what confidence can he expect that God should *vouchsafe* him in his dying Hour that *extraordinary Grace* which he stands in need of, and without which he must dye *forever*? For when a Man hath been mocking God all his Life with the Promises of a *future Repentance*,

tance, but from time to time hath still delay-ed and deferred it till he hath driven it to the *last Extremity*, so that now he must re-pent or be *damned* perhaps the next *moment*; with what face can he implore such an *extra-ordinary* Favour from that God with whom he hath so wretchedly prevaricated? For unless we suppose God to be a Being that loves to be provoked, one that is taken with *Affronts* and *Injuries*, and consequently that measures his Favours to us by the de-grees and number of our *Rebellions* against him; we cannot reasonably expect that he should be then most kind to us when we have offended him as much as we are able, and would never be perswaded to repent of our Wickedness till we are able to offend him no more. I desire to have as large Ap-prehensions of the *Mercy* of God as can be reasonably admitted, but withal I am assured he is the hardest to be imposed upon of any one in the World; and being so, it cannot well be expected that when in despite of his Authority and *frequent* Invitations to Repentance, the *Sinner* hath *squandered* away all his *Strength* and *Vigour* in a Course of Wickedness, God should be so indulgent to him on his *Death-bed* as to supply that Strength which he hath spent in sinning against him by the *extraordinary* Assistances of his own *Grace*; especially considering how

how often he hath declared his Resolution of dispensing his Grace to us in greater or lesser Proportions according to the improvements we make of it. So *James* iv. 6, 7, 8. *For the Scripture offereth more Grace; and therefore faith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Submit your selves therefore unto God; resist the Devil; and he will fly from you; draw near unto God, and he will draw near unto you.* And thus more expressly in the *Parable of the Talents, Mat. xxv.* 29. *For unto every one that hath, that is, improves what he hath, shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, i. e. improves not what he hath, shall be taken away, even that which he hath.* God therefore having thus declared that he will lessen or augment his Grace proportionably as we abuse or improve it, we may reasonably expect that the oftener we do repulse its Motions, the weaker will be its Attempts upon us, and so weaker and weaker till 'tis wholly withdrawn, and hath given us up for *desperate and irreclaimable*; and consequently if God proceed in this Method, as doubtless he most ordinarily doth, then the longer a Man continues in sin, the more he is *abandoned* of the Grace of God. So that when the Sinner is arrived to his *Death bed*, he may reasonably expect that if Gods Affiance be not wholly withdrawn and lessened

ed into nothing, as he may justly fear it will, yet it will be much less vigorous and powerful than in any *former Period* of his Life; and if it be, his Condition is next to desperate; for if his Soul be not *renewed* and *changed*, within a *few* Moments it is ruined beyond all recovery. And since to effect this *Change* is a Work of *mighty* Difficulty, what but a *mighty* Grace can enable the *dying* Penitent in so *short* a time and with so *small* a Strength to perform it? So that the *Summ* of all is this, though the Condition of him that *remit*s his Repentance to a *Death-bed* be not absolutely *desperate*, yet 'tis so fearfully *hazardous*, that nothing on this side *Hell* can be more wretched and deplorable; and therefore for Men to put off their Repentance to the last, and venture their Souls upon so great an *Uncertainty*, is a piece of the most *desperate* Folly and Madness. I confess when a Man hath been so desperate and cruel to himself as to run himself upon this *fearful* Venture, I would by no means discourage his Repentance, but rather Use all *Means* to invite and persuade him to it: for Repentance is always the best thing we can do, and when a Man hath been so desperately *beset* as to defer it to a *Death-bed*, and put himself upon this *woful* Extremity, this is the *last* Remedy he can apply, and the *best* Refuge he hath to fly to. But so long

long as Men are well and in Health, and have a fair *space* of Repentance in their hands, I would not for all the World encourage them to run such a *desperate Hazard*; for next to leaping headlong into *Hell* without any Repentance at all, doubtless the most *desperate Folly* a Man can be guilty of is to defer his Repentance till he is dying. And so I pass on to

3. The Third and last thing proposed; which was, to shew you that supposing our *Death-bed Penitent* should repent effectually, yet how impossible it is for him in an *ordinary way* to attain any *comfortable Assurance* of it. And indeed considering how many *Cheats* and *Frauds* there are under most of our Resolutions of Amendment, it is at least extreamly difficult for us to be any otherwise *secure* of them than by their Effects and Performances. As for the *dying Penitent* therefore that doth not long enough *survive* his Resolution to see the Execution of it, how can he be secure that it is sincere and perfect, especially considering that the *Circumstances* in which he makes it are such as do conspire to render it extremlly *suspitious*. For

1. He makes it under the *fear of Death*.
2. In the *Absence of Temptation*.
3. Under a great *agony of Conscience*.
4. In the *near Neighbourhood of Eternity*.

1. He makes his Resolution under a mighty fear of Death, which gives him great reason to suspect it. We daily see how much our Humours change and vary upon every Remove out of one Condition into another, and how these do cast the *Ballance* of our Superior Soul and make us every day so many several sorts of Men. Every *Wind* almost turns our Minds towards a *new* point, and like *Water* we take the form of every *Vessel* we are put into. So that we have great reason to suspect that our *Death-bed* Repentance is not so much the *Mould* of our Minds, as of the *Condition* we are put into, and that were we poured back again into an *healthful* Condition, we should immediately lose our *present* Shape, and return into our *former* Figure again. For when Men see their Life is in Gods hand, and that he is ready to cut it in sunder, it is no wonder at all if they do what they can to *bribe* him to spare them a little longer; and consequently, if they resolve *well*, and make *fair* Promises of *future* Obedience; which is the best thing they can do in this Extremity. But if their Resolution be founded in the *Fear* of Death, its *Foundation* is contrary to its *Performance*, the *Motive* of their Refolition to live *well* for the *future* being a presumption that they shall live no *longer*; And it will be an *Act* of *Reason* and *Justice* to themselves to *stick* to their

their resolution, when the *Motive* of it is changed; and on the Contrary, of *Imprudence* and *Unkindness*, to forsake the *Conclusion*, when the *Premises* are consulted. So that upon such grounds as these what can be expected but that this *sick* Resolver will resume his *Sins* with his *Health* if he should recover, and leave his *new Vows* in that *Bed* where he first took them up, and discharge his *Fears* and his good *Actions*, his *Physician* and his *Confessor* together; it being so, how is it possible he should be assured that his Resolution is *sincere* unless he recover and perform it?

2. He makes his Resolution in the *Absence* of *Temptation*, which gives him also great reason to suspect it. For now the *Seasons* of the *Pleasures* of *Sin* are over, he can not *relish* their *Delights* because his *cloyed* *Appetite* distastes them as the *full* *Stomach* doth the *Honey-comb*: and his *Soul* being now *uninterested* in all *sinful* *Pleasure*, and being naturally in continual Motion, must necessarily divert the *Current* of its Action some other way; and the *future* *Sate* to which it is so *nearly* allied being all it hath to work upon, it is no wonder if the *Freedom* of its Motion turn *thitherwards*, being diverted out of its *old* *Channel*: for if he love his *Sins* or the *World* never so well, he must leave them whether he will or no; if he dis-

like God and his *Holiness* and an *everlasting Abode* with him never so much, he is forced upon them, or *dash'd* upon *eternal Misery*, which it is impossible for him to chuse. So that now his good *Resolution* is scarce an *Act of Choice*; for tho' he would not chuse to obey God if he could still *enjoy* his *former Lusts*, yet *they* being out of his reach, he must take what is to be had. So that 'tis mighty Suspicious that the Sense of his *Resolution* is no more than this, *Holiness* is good when a Man is just dying, but while he lives and can enjoy his *Lusts*, they are a great deal better; so that the Approach of *Death* makes *Holiness* good to him upon this account only, because there would be some thing *worse*, and there can no longer be any thing *better*; and 'tis to be feared he esteems it *good* only in comparison with *Hell* which without it will inevitably follow. And when it thus purchases the reputation of being *good* from the *near* approach of such a mighty *Evil*, it is not so much esteemed a *Good* as a *lesser Evil*; which argues that the Mans Judgment is not at all altered, for still he looks on *Holiness* as an *Evil*, and in chusing it before *Hell*, he only chuses of two *Evils* the least, and 'tis extreamly Suspicious that he would no more have chosen it now than he did while he was *Well* and in *Health*, but that it stands at present out

of the Air of Temptation, and is presented to him without the *Counterpoize* of those sinful Delights for whose sake he formerly rejected it. For there are many *Apprehensions* which make deep Impressions not only on our *Brain* and *Fancies*, but on our *Affections* too, whilst these are calm and unprovoked; which impressions notwithstanding quickly vanish upon the starting of *new Objects*, and the provocations of *contrary Fantasies* and *Affections* by them; so that it is impossible to be certain what those *good Resolutions* will come to which a Man makes when he hath no *Temptation* to the contrary. The utmost therefore that can be said of them is this, they may be sincere and they may hold out, but there is an *infinite Hazard* in them; they are easily made, because at present there is no *Temptation* against them, no *vicious Appetite* strong enough to controul them; but there is vait Reason to fear that should the Man recover, and his *Appetites* return again upon him, the next *Temptation* would betray him and make him *surrender* up all his *Resolution*; and consequently if he die before he hath made a *Trial* of himself, his *Condition* must needs be extremely uncertain, his *Hope* must sit upon the Brinks of *Despair*, and his *Soul* go trembling into *Eternity* to think what a *Hazard* it is now a running.

3. He resolves under the *Horrors* and *Agonies* of an *awakened Conscience*, and this also renders his Resolution extreamly Suspicious. And indeed that Man must be in a *dead Sleep* that will not *awake* when *Death* is sounding the *Trumpet of Judgment* in his Ears, and calling him instantly away to give up his *unprepared Accounts*. For though when *Judgment* seems to us at the other end of *Heaven* all is quiet, yet certainly when *Death* brings us to the very *Seat of it*, the *Ave* of that *dreadful Tribunal* of which we are now in sight, and the *Sense* of so many *GUILTS* staring us in the face, of which we must the next *Moment* acquit our selves, or Die for ever, must necessarily shake our *sleepy Consciences* into *un speakable Horrors* and *Agonies*, and make us infinitely *Solicitous* to fly from the *Wrath* that is to come. And in this Distress being conscious to himself that the best thing he can do is to resolve upon Amendment for the future, here he puts in for *Sanctuary* having no other hole to hide his guilty Head. So that now to resolve well is hardly an *Act of Choice*, and it is much to be feared that 'tis only an *Expedient* snatched up for the present Extremity; and though now he be very serious, yet that perhaps is only the effect of a suddain *Cast of Melancholy* on his *Thoughts*; and if it be, when that removes, his

his *Thoughts* will be quite of another Colour, or if it be the *Result* of a more through Conviction, yet it is very probable that may go off too when the Mans *Circumstances* are altered; that when the present *Tragick Scene* is removed out of sight, and the *Alarm* of his *approaching Judgment* sounds no longer in his Ears, he will presently let fail those Resolutions again which he took up only as a *shield*, against his *Conscience*. And this being so uncertain, what a fearful *Hazard* must that Man run that depends upon such Resolutions, and *imbarks* his Soul into *Eternity* in them? For tho it is possible they may be sincere, yet it is highly probable that they are not, but as they were *raised* only by a *Storm* of Horror, so if *that* were *laid* they would fall again; and if they should be *False* and *Hypocritical*, as God only knows whether they are or no, the poor Man is certainly *lost* and *undone* for ever.

4. And lastly, he resolves in the near Neighbourhood of *Eternity*, which also renders his Resolution very Suspicious. For the *Soul* is never more sensible of *Eternity* than when 'tis walking on the *Confines* of it; for the very loosing it from the *Body* wherein it dwells, and in which its Motions are all confined, doth many times give her some *lesser* Degree of those Advantages which *free* and *naked* Spirits have that are not *imprisoned* in *Flesh*.

Flesh. For the *less* the Soul is found to work by the Body, the *higher* are its Operations, and all her *extraordinry* Motions are a kind of *Ravishment* from Sense. It is therefore very probable that when the Soul is leaving the Body, it hath naturally a more *sensible* Touch and Feeling of its *eternal* State, because the *nearer* any thing is to its *Residence*, the more *vehement* is its Motion *thither*; and consequently the *nearer* the Soul is to its *eternal* Abode, the more *quick* and *vigorous* may we reasonably suppose its Motions *thither*; so that when the *other* World is in view, and it is just upon the *Region of Spirits*, it is no wonder if the Sense of her approaching *everlasting* Fate put her into great *Tremblings* and *Agonies*. For now there is nothing between her and *Eternity* to *intercept* her prospect of it; no *sinful* Pleasures or Delights to *interrupt* her Thoughts of it, or *deaden* the force of its Impressions: so that if in this *State of Things* she should not resolve to throw off her *Sins* and embrace *Vertue*, when *she* is in view of that *Hell* of *endless* Miseries to which those tend, and of that *Heaven* of Joys to which this aspires, it would be prodigious. But whether this Resolution will hold when *Heaven* and *Hell* are *vanished* out of sight again, it is a mighty *Hazard*; and sadly probable it is that if the Man recover from the *Brinks of Eternity*, and

and get farther off it, he will soon forget his *good* Resolutions, and leave all his Piety behind him. For when he resolved, alas he was *sick* and *dying*, leaving *this* World and launching into *another*; but when he is well again, the Case will be altered; *this* World will be present to him, and the other a great way off, and when his Resolution is thus abandoned of the Motive that *animated* and held it together, there is infinite reason to suspect that it will immediately languish and expire. So that the Summ of all is this the *Debathed* Penitent may possibly repent sincerely, but 'tis an *infinite* Hazard whether he will or no; and if he doth, it is *ordinarily* impossible for him to have any comfortable Assurance of it. I will not deny but in some *rare* and *extraordinary* Cases, to serve some great and excellent End, God may immediately *suggest* Comfort to him and give him the Joy of his Repentance; but whether ever he doth or will do so or no, is more than I am able to determine. For this I am sure of he hath no where obliged himself to it, and what he hath not promised, we have no reason to expect. For whatsoever is *extraordinary*, is more than what is promised, but the *ordinary* comforts of *dejected* Penitents are such as arise from an *inward* Sense of their own Sincerity, and of the *glorious* Hopes to which that intitles them.

them. But as for the Sincerity of the *Death-bed* Penitent it is so indiscernable by reason of *Suspicious Circumstances*, that without an *immediate Revelation* it is hardly possible to be perceived, and from any promise, that God hath made, there is not the least encouragement to hope for any such *immediate Revelation*. So that if any such *Comfort* be *vouchsafed* to him, it is doubtless very rarely; because it is *extraordinary*. I know there is nothing more common than for Men that never repented till they came to *die*, to *die* very comfortably; But alas I am *horribly* afraid that generally their *Comforts* are nothing but the *Effects* either of their *Stupidity*, or their *Disease*, or else the *Consequence* of very *false* and *dangerous Principles*.

First, many times it is plainly the *Effect* of their *wretched Stupidity* and *Sottishness*. For some Men we see are so *Stupid* in their *Sins*, that nothing but *Hell* flames will awake them; and though when they feel themselves upon the edge of *Eternity* passing into an *irreversible Condition*, they cannot forbear reflecting on their *Sins*, and starting at the dangerous *Consequence* of them; yet if they can but so far obtain of themselves as to weep for, and resolve against them, they think that all is well again, and so go into *Eternity* with a great deal of *Comfort* and *Assurance*. But these are a sort of *Stu-*

*pid*

pid Souls that have no regard of themselves, that are dying *forever* but have not Sense enough to apprehend their Danger, or to feel the Disease of which they are dying; for if they had they would never be so confident of their Recovery upon such *slight* and *easy* Applications; they would consider how false and hypocritical all their *former* Resolutions have proved, and how much cause there is to suspect lest *those* should prove as bad as *they*, and how impossible it is to impose upon God to whose *all-seeing* Eye the *inmost* Nature, and *utmost* Issues of Things are open and naked, which would necessarily render them extreamly jealous and Solicitous concerning their *eternal* State. I am now going away into everlasting *Weal* or *Woe*, Lord, what will become of me, the only security I have that it will go well with me *forever* is only this, that I am resolved upon a *future* Amendment; but alas I have *too* much reason to suspect my Resolution is *rotten* at the Core, and if it be, *Woe* be to me that ever I was Born. This without all doubt would be his Language if he were but throughly awakned into a Sense of his Danger, which because he is not he dies in a *Dream* of *Happiness* and will presently awake in real and intolerable Misery. And as this Comfort of the *Death-bed* Penitent doth oftentimes arise from his *Stupidity*, so,

Secondly, many times 'tis nothing else but the mere *Effect* of his Disease. For there are many Diseases that have a natural *Enthusiasm* attending them, *viz.* such as alternately chill and freeze the *Blood*, and put the *Spirits* into unequal Motions; and to such as these *Dejections* and *Transport*s do as naturally follow, as *Shiverings* and *Burnings* to an *Ague*. For when the *Blood* runs low, and the *Spirits* are weak and languid, then usually the *Scene* is all *Tragedy*; *melancholy* *Vapours* *cloud* and *overwhelm* their *Fancies*, and they are lost in a *Wood* of *Spiritual* *Desertions*. But when the *Tide* turns and warmer *Blood* flows up into the *Brain*, and refreshes the *drooping* *Fancy* with *Brisk* and *active* *Spirits*, then they are full of *Raptures* and *Extasies*, which, because they look on as streaming from an *heavenly* *Original*, they labour to swell and heighten to the utmost *Brink* of their Capacities; in so much that sometimes they are even stifled and overwhelmed with joy; and it is usual for them, especially in high *Fever*s, when their *Blood* is more briskly *fermented* by the sharpness of their *Humours*, to chafe and tickle themselves into real *Trances* and *Deli-riums*, which they, not understanding the *Structure* of their own *Bodies*, and the *Nature* of their Disease, do commonly mistake for the immediate *Sealings* and *Incomes* of the

the *Spirit* of God. So that if they chance to die in one of these *Transports*, those that are *Spectators* of their End conclude that they depart in full Assurance, and are most infallibly received into the *joy* of their Master; whereas most commonly I fear their Joy expires with them, and leaves them desperate and miserable. But then

Thirdly, In the third and last place, their Comfort is many times nothing else but the Effect and Consequence of their own *false* and *dangerous* Principles. They have entertained such Principles as these, that their own *Personal Righteousness* is not at all necessary to render them acceptable to God, and that all is required of them is to rest and rely upon *Jesus Christ*; which if they do, all their *Defects* and *Miscarriages* shall be most certainly covered with the *Robe* of his Righteousness, and God will look upon them, and deal with them as if they had been as righteous as he. That Men have imbibed such Principles as these, and learned to practise on them, we who converse with *Sick-beds* cannot be ignorant; for when they have gone on impenitently to their *Death-beds*, and we come to inquire into the grounds of their Hopes, this we find is the *ordinary Refuge* they fly to, that *Jesus Christ* hath obeyed and suffered for them; and therefore they firmly rely upon him, and fling their *Souls* into

into his Arms, and make no doubt but he will catch them and save them from the Wrath to come: as if the design of our *Saviour's* Undertaking had been to priviledge those who believe in him to Live wickedly, and Die comfortably. That he by his *Merit* and *Satisfaction* hath obtained this Grant of his Father, that all who heartily submit themselves unto him shall be received into his Favour, notwithstanding their past *Rebellions* and present *Imperfections* of Obedience, I think an undoubted Principle of *Christianity*; but that he hath obtained this Favour for us *absolutely* whether we submit to his Father or no, is so far from being *Christian*, that I think 'tis one of the most *Antichristian* Doctrines that was ever set on broach in the World; for it plainly defeats the main Design of *Christianity*, and totally dissolves all its Obligations. For whereas the principal Drift of *Christianity* is to teach Men to deay *Ungodliness* and *Worldly lusts*, and to Live *soberly* *righteously* and *godly* in this present World, this Doctrine unteaches all again, and gives Men a Dispensation to live as wickedly as they please. For if upon my *Reliance* upon Christ I shall be received into Gods Favour whether I submit to him or no, farewell to all Obligations of Obedience. What need Men be so Sollicitous of making such hear-

ty

ty *Submissions* of their *Souls* to God, if the Righteousness of their *Saviour* be a *Sanctuary* from the Authority of his *Laws*? So that for Men to rely confidently upon *Christ* before they are secure that their *Souls* are heartily subjected to him, is a piece of the greatest Arrogance and Presumption; and tho' they may pacify their *Conscience* with it when they are dying, yet when they are dead they will find they have made more bold than welcome with their *Saviour*; that he will not be a *Patron* to their *sins*, nor side with them so far in their *Rebellions* against his Father, as to shelter them in his *Wounds* from the due *Vengeance* of eternal *Fire*. Altho' therefore these *Death-bed* *Penitents* do *too* often die very comfortably, yet considering what *false* grounds their *Comforts* generally stand on, I had much rather see them go down to their *Graves* in the greatest *sorrow* and *anxiety* of *Soul*; for if they should miscarry, as there is vast reason to fear they will, it grieves my *Soul* to think what a *surprize* they will be in, how they will be *blanked* and *amazed* when, contrary to their bold Presumptions of waking in *immortal Joys*, they find themselves among *Devils* and *damned Ghosts* abandoned to *endless Misery* and *Despair*. And indeed I cannot but wonder that a *Man* who hath deferred his *Repentance* to a *Death-bed* should have

Q

the

the confidence to talk of Comfort and Assurance ; which is such a Reward as God usually appropriates to long and most eminent Piety. But for a Man that hath rebelled against God all his days to *pirk* up presently after a few sighs and submissions, and pretend to as much Assurance of his *Saviour* as if he had been his *ancient* Friend and Familiar, is *down right* inexcusable Impudence. Alas poor Man ! what less canst thou do in Modesty than spend the *small* Remainder of thy Days in *Sighs*, and *Tears*, and deep *Humiliations* ; and when thou hast done thy utmost, to content thy self with this, that thou art not altogether desperate? But as for Comfort and Assurance, it would well become thee to leave *them* to those who have better deserved them; for after all thou canst do, if thou gettest to *Heaven* it will be a Wonder of mercy : so that unless thou art absolutely besotted, thou must die in great fear, and go trembling away into *Eternity*. So miserable is the State of the *death-bed* Penitent, that it is a mighty Hazard whether ever he repent to purpose, and if he doth, it is ordinarily impossible to reap any comfortable assurance of it.

And now I expect that it will be objected against this Discourse that it favours of *too* much Rigour and Severity, because it represents the State of *dying* Penitents so very *near*

near to desperate. To which I briefly answer, that if it were absolutely desperate, as I confess I think it very near so, yet doubtless the best way is to represent Things as they are: for the nature of the Thing is already fixed, and neither your Opinion nor mine will alter it. Indeed if I could recover a dying Man by telling him that he is not a dying, it would be cruelty in me to pronounce him past Recovery; and so could I save the dying Penitent by telling him that he is secure, I was very much to blame should I say his Case is desperate; but alas! if it be so, it will be so, let me say what I please; so that in pronouncing that it is so, I only make him sensible of it a few Moments sooner. I do but shew him what he must trust to, and what he will presently be convinced of by *woeful Experience*; and by ringing out a *passing Bell* to his *departing Soul*, I do him this kindness at least that he will not be in *Hell* before he is aware of it. And certainly this is some Charity, tho' it be severe; but yet neither do I represent the Case to be altogether desperate, tho' I must confess some very great and eminent *Divines* have done so; for I have endeavoured to shew that *true Repentance* is not *impossible* on a *Death-bed*, tho' extreamly *hazardous* and *difficult*; so that still there is *some Hope*,

enough to encourage the Sinners *utmost* Endeavour, and keep his Head *above* water ; and for him to give up himself to Despair while there is any glimmering of hope, is to enter into *Hell* before his time, which is a degree of imprudence next to *that* he hath been already guilty of, in putting himself upon this dismal Extremity. But supposing it had been represented as wholly desperate, yet this can occasion no Man that hears me to despair, unless it be thro' his own Default. For God be praised I am not now preaching to a sick or dying *Auditory* ; you are now well and in health, and have a space and season of Repentance before you, which if you will but diligently improve, you prevent the *fearful Hazard* whereunto a *Death-bed* Penitence exposes you. But if thro' your own neglect you should fall into it and despair in it, who can you blame but your selves for it. All that I aim at is to prevent your Danger by persuading you to repent betime ; but if you will be so cruel to your selves as to delay it till it is *too* late, and then *Despair* overtake you, you may thank your selves for it that would take no warning. And therefore to render this Argument yet more effectual, I intend to represent to you at large the *Folly* and *Wickedness* of deferring our Repentance to the

the last, and thereby to excite and provoke you to a *speedy* Resolution of Amendment; that so when the *Bridegroom* comes you may not with these *foolish Virgins* in my Text find the *Door of Heaven* shut against you, but that having finished your work, you may be admitted with *that good and profitable Servant* into the *joy of your Master*.

## REVELATIONS II. 21.

*I gave her space to repent of her fornication and she repented not.*

THE Person here spoken of is *Jesabel*, as you may see in the foregoing verse; but who this *Jesabel* was is very much disputed by *Expositors*. *Epiphanius* and some that follow him refer this title to those *Women Heretics*, *Priscilla*, *Maximilla*, and *Quintilla* who followed *Montanus*, and about *Commodus* his Reign took upon them to be *Prophetesses*, and under *that* pretence propagated many monstrous *Heresies*. But since it must be after *St. John's* time that those *Women* were in the *Church of Thiatria*, and since *St. John* here speaks not *prophetically* of what should be, but *historically* of what already was, is it not supposeable that these *Montanist Women* should be the *Jesabel* here spoken of: besides that the *Character* here given her doth not agree with that *Sect*, for these *Montanists* were a very severe and strict *Sect*, and that was the main motive which seduced *Tertullian* to it; whereas this *Jesabel*, or *Sect* described by her Name, is here accused of *Fornication*, and sacrificing to *Idols*. So that it seems more probable that by *her* is meant either

either the whole *Sect* of the *Gnosticks*, which as all agree was infamous for *Leudness*, *Uncleanness* and *Idolatry*; or else some particular *Woman* who was an eminent *Patroneſ* and *Ring-leader* of that Party. And if he mean this latter, as it seems most probable by the Distinction he makes between *her* and those that committed *Adultery* with her, that is, her Followers; then it is probable that he means *Helena the Whore of Simon Magus*, who was Father of the *Gnosticks*; whom he styled his *πρώτη ἐννοία*, or *first Conception*. And well might she be called *Jesabel*, since she so much resembled the Wife of *Ahab* called by that Name in her notorious *Whoredoms* and *Idolatries*; but yet in her he reprehends the whole *Sect* which was all involved with her in the same Impenitence. So that it was equally true both of *her* and of her Followers, that *God gave them space to repent of their Fornications, and they repented not*, that is, *God's patience waited on them, and gave them time to reform their leud and infamous Practices*; but still they deferred and put it off, and under all his *Forbearance* continued obstinate and impenitent. So that the design of the Words is to represent the *Evil* of Mens putting off their Repentance when *God in mercy forbears them, and gives them space enough to perform it*. And how great an *Evil* this is I shall indeavour to represent to you.

1. By shewing you the *Wickedness*,

2. The *Absurdity*, and

3. The *Danger* of it.

1. I shall shew you the Wickedness of it, and that in these following particulars:

1. 'Tis a *prophane Mockery* of God's Patience.

2. 'Tis an *ungrateful Undervaluing* of his Service.

3. 'Tis an *open Contempt* to his Authority.

4. 'Tis an *impious Presumption* on his Goodness.

5. 'Tis an *arrogant Defiance* of his Displeasure.

1. To defer and put off our Repentance when God gives us space to repent is a *prophane Mockery* of his Patience. That he did not strike us *dead* upon our first sin, and consign us immediately to the *chains* of Darkness, was purely the Effect of his Goodness; 'twas this that obliged him to try us a little longer in hope that at last we might be prevailed with to consider our danger, and correct our folly before it had determined us to an *irreversible Ruin*. Whilst therefore we linger out the space of our Repentance in Delays, we sport and *dally* with the Patience of God; we promise fair, and give it hope that it shall at last obtain its Ends upon us; but when we come to performance,

we,

we *baffle* and *disappoint* it, and render all its *past* attendance ineffectual. For when the Date of our *former* Promise is expired, and God expects our Performance, instead of that, we only give him new Promises, and pay him with *Words* instead of *Things*; as if by our Promises we only intended to raise in him an expectation of our Repentance, that so we might have an opportunity to vex him with a Disappointment. We promise we will repent *hereafter* only to get leave to sin for the *present*, and so when *that* *hereafter* comes we promise again, and only repeat the *old* Delusion; as if we meant to *tantalize* his Patience by proffering the *golden* Fruit of our Repentance, and snatching it away again before he can lay hold of it. Now what a *fearful* wickedness is this for Men to put such Tricks upon the *Almighty*, still to defer the payment of a Debt that hath been so long due, and so often demanded, and still to pay his *Demand's* with Promises, and only feed his Expectations with Air! as tho' we thought him bound to attend our *Leisure*, and to give us Credit to run deeper on score upon the security of our Promise of *future* Payment which we have already forfeited over and over.

2. Thus to put off and delay our Repentance, is a most *base* and *ungrateful* Undervaluing of his Service: For the Reason why we delay

delay our Repentance, is, because we think it will be time enough to return to our Duty ~~hereafter~~, when the Opportunities of Sin are gone, and the Pleasure of it is out of season. For into what other sense can God construe our *Delays* but only this, that it is our Design to shift off him and his Service, till we have served our Lusts as long as we are able, and never to begin our Repentance till we are able to be wicked no longer. Now I beseech you, could you without Horror and Trembling make such an *Address* to God as this, *O God, I know it is my Duty, and the very End of my Life to serve thee; but I beseech thee, be not angry, if while I live I serve my Lusts, and employ the Powers thou hast given me in Rebellion against thee: And if thou wilt but indulge me this, I will be thy humble Servant when I am good for nothing, neither to serve, nor disobey thee: Do but have Patience till I am Bed-rid, and can enjoy the World and my Lusts no longer, and then I will return to thee, and be Sorry for my Sins, and wish that I had never offended thee. I would now devote the Service of my Youth and Strength to thee, but that I am sensible it is too good for thee; and therefore come what will, I will feed my Lusts with the Marrow of my Days, and if the dull insipid Bone will content thee, it is at thy Service.* This, though it be horrible Language, is yet the *natural Sense* of our *Delays*. We would repent im- medi-

mediately, but that we think it is a Thousand Pities such *fair* Opportunities of sinning should be lost, and so many *precious* Minutes should be so ill bestowed: So that the reason of our *Delay* is this, that at present we apprehend we can spend our time more pleasantly in sinning on, than in the Exercise of a *severe* Repentance, and consequently, while we can still sin on with Pleasure, we shall still have the same reason to delay, and never think it reasonable to begin our Repentance till we are old, decrepid, or dying, and can sin with Pleasure no longer. Now what a *profane* Reflection is it upon God and his Service, to think our selves *too* good to serve him till we are good for nothing; that the *Dregs* and *Lees* of our Life are good enough for him, and that he ought to be satisfied with the *leavings* of our Lusts, and to take it as a Favour that we will repent of our sins when we are no longer capable of sinning with Pleasure? With what Patience can he endure to be thus slighted and contemned by us, to be thus rudely put off with the *Refuse* of our Lusts, thus unmannerrly treated with the *Scraps* of the *Devil's Table*?

3. To defer our Repentance when God gives us space to repent, is an open contempt of his Authority; for by the Laws of Religion we are bound either always to con-

tinue

tinue innocent, or when we have contracted any Guilt, to expiate it by *immediate Repentance*; for so long as we continue under any guilty Impenitence, we are in a state of *actual Rebellion* against God, and are not only accountable for the Guilt of the first Sin, but also for *that* of not having repented of it. And though we do not repeat the first Sin any more, yet our very continuing impenitent under the Guilt of it, brings a distinct Guilt upon us, and renders us doubly criminal in the sight of God; for unless our sinning against God doth *cancel* the Obligation of his Laws, they must necessarily oblige us to repent, that is, to revoke our wicked purpose, and return to our Obedience as soon as ever we have broken and transgressed it. 'Tis true indeed as for particular *affirmative* Precepts, they being always relative to *Time*, and *Place*, and *Persons*, are to be practised only in *special* Times, and *pertinent* Occasions, because they being but Parts of a good Life, must give way by turns for other Parts and Instances of it, which are of the like particular and limited Nature with themselves; but yet we are always obliged to the Purpose and Disposition of Practising these, whensoever Occasion doth require it. A man is not always bound to be doing *Justice*, by giving *Alms*, or saying his *Prayers*; but to the *Devotion* of Prayer,

er, the *Disposition* of Justice, and the *Charity* of Alms he is continually obliged: These being Works of the *inward* Man cannot be limited to Times and Opportunities, nor receive any *accidental* Determinations from without, but are always possible, and always good, and always necessary; for the performance of them depends only on the *Grace* of God, and the *Will* of Man, and that never fails, if this doth not; and therefore is always possible, unless we will not, but it is always necessary whether we will or no: So that when we have broken our purpose of obeying God by any *actual* Sin, it is another distinct Sin, not to renew it by *immediate* Repentance, and when by this *actual* Sin, we have lost our disposition to obey God, and contracted the contrary, there is in this a *proper* Guilt, and Venom distinct from that *actual* Sin that introduced it. But then there are general Precepts of *Religion*, such as to love God, and to Repent from *dead* Works; the *first* of which includes the *whole* Religion of a Man, the *second*, the *whole* Religion of a Sinner; and consequently we being *both*, must needs be universally obliged to both these Duties in all Accidents, Times, and Cases. For when once we have *apostatized* from our Duty, all our *after*-obedience is an *Act* of Repentance; and therefore though the Command of it be affirmed

firmative, yet because it is universal, including all those Duties, which by binding at several Times, do fill up all our Time ; there can be no Time in which we are not bound to repent. This I have the longer insisted on, because it is a great *Question* among the *Roman Casuists*, whether a Man be always bound to this Duty, and *some* of them have been so wicked, as to determin that a Man is not bound to repent till he comes to die ; *others*, that it is sufficient if he repent *once* a Year ; others, *thrice* upon the Three great *Holidays of Christmas, Easter, and Whitunday* ; as if there were any time wherein it was not our Duty to return to our Duty ; on the Laws of our Religion did only oblige us at certain seasons, and in the Intervals gave us a *free Dispensation* to live as wickedly as we pleased. Since therefore as soon as we have sinned, we are bound *immediately* to repent, it necessarily follows, that he who sins, and then delays his Repentance, sins Twice ; his very Delay being a farther Provocation. For how can we imagine that he who persists in *Rebellion* against God Twenty Years together, doth not much more offend him, than he who submits within Twenty *Months*, or Twenty *Days*, or Twenty *Hours* ; and if the longer we persist, the more we do offend him, then every *delay* of our Repentance must needs be a further

ther Provocation. The Sum of all therefore is this, That every Day God calls us to Repentance, and that every Call of his ought to be regarded, and consequently, that every regardless *Delay* of it, adds to the heap of our Guilt, and helps to fill up the Measure of our Iniquities. And what a *rude Contempt* is it of God's Authority, when he commands us to repent to *Day*, to cry well we will repent *tomorrow*? *Lord, we beseech thee be not so hasty with us, suffer us to offend thee yet a little longer; for whether thou wilt or no, we are resolved to do it. We will repent, but will not be prescribed when, as for that leave it to us, for say what thou wilt, we are fully resolved to take leave to do it when we please.* This in effect is the impious meaning of every *Delay* of our Repentance, and when God commands us to repent, we might as modestly tell him that we will not repent at all, as when he commands us to repent *now*, tell him, that we will repent *hereafter*.

4. To defer our Repentance when God giveth us space to repent, is an *impious Presumption* on his Goodness. The reason why God forbears us when we sin, is to give us *second Thoughts*, and to see our Danger, and to run away from it; that so he may not *surprise us into ruine*: for the end of his *long-suffering*, is to lead us to Repentance; but when upon this consideration we take

take encouragement to delay, we do not only defeat his Goodness, but so far as in us lies, render it injurious to him. For we war against him under the Protection of his kindness to us, and fortifie our selves in our *Rebellion*, in that very *Goodness*, and *Long-suffering*, with which he seeks to conquer and subdue us. O barbarous Ingratitude! that we should fetch Arguments from his mercy to offend him, and maintain Enmity against him out of the *Revenue* of his own indulgence! would you not look on that *Malefactor* as a *Monster*, that should rob his *Judge* merely because he reprimed him, and use him with all the *Despite* and *Ignominy*, because he knew him to be a *merciful Man*, and will be loath to hang him the next *Sessions*? and is it not altogether as monstrous for us to abuse God, because he is kind to us, and to take Encouragement to rob him of our *Duty*, because we know he is unwilling to ruine us? but tho' every Man hath not Impudence enough to assign *this Reason*, yet it is plain, this lies at the bottom of all their *Delays*. Because *Sentence against an evil Work is not executed speedily*, saith the Wise Man, therefore the *Heart of the Sons of Men is fully set in 'em to do Evil*, Eccles. 8,11. But what horrid Baseness is this to urge his Goodness against himself, and fetch Motives from his *Mercy* to affront his *Authority*? it seems, if

he

he were worse to us, we would be better to him ; if he were less kind, we would be more dutiful. O Wretches that we are ! I had almost said, 'tis even pity that we have a God to deal with, that we are not under the Government of some *Fury* that would watch for our halting, and catch at all Opportunities to plague and punish us ; and we were best have a care we do not presume too much upon God, for tho' he bears long, he will not bear always ; and thiere is nothing can sooner provoke him, than to see us conduct our *Rebellions* against him under the *Banners* of his own Goodness. This is such an *intolerable* Provocation as is sufficient to inrage a *Soul* of Patience, and turn the most boundless Mercy into *Fury* : and if once his Wrath be kindled against us, he will make us rue for ever in our *Abuses* of his Goodness.

5. And lastly, To defer our Repentance when God gives us space for it, is an *arrogant* Defiance of his Displeasure, for God hath sufficiently declared to us the Displeasure he takes in the *Delays* of our Repentance. Thus in his *holy Word* he hath given us fair warning of it : thus *Rom. 2.14.* *despisest thou the Riches of his Goodness, and Forbearance, and Long-suffering, not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance ?* From whence I argue 1. that the Goodness of God

God is a Motive to Repentance. 2. That not to be persuaded by it, is to despise his Goodness. 3. That this despising his Goodness by delaying our Repentance, is treasuring up Wrath against the Day of Wrath. So also Rev. 2. 5. Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first Works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will removeth thy Candlestick out of its place except thou repent. Where he plainly declares, that if our Repentance be not very quickly, his Judgments will be too quick for us; by which he plainly signifies how much he is displeased with our Delays, how importunately they urge and provoke him to overwhelm us with a speedy Destruction. And accordingly we see by Experience, how he takes some away in their early sins, and gives them no respite; and he who hath made it *damnation* to some for not repenting instantly, hath made it *damnable* to all. The Earth doth not open, and swallow up all Rebels in the Day of their Mutiny; but it did so once, and thereby God hath sufficiently signified to all Ages his Displeasure against Rebellion; And so it is in deferring Repentance; for that some have smarted for it *eternally* is a sufficient Manifestation that God is displeased with every one that defers it. Whilst therefore we delay our Repentance from time to time, we sit down quietly under the

divines

divine Displeasure, as if it were altogether indifferent whether the Almighty be pleased or displeased with us ; we do as good as say, *Lord, we know well enough thou wouldest have us repent immediately, and that if we do not, thou wilt be angry with us ; but be thou never so angry, we will not repent as yet, we must enjoy our Lusts a little longer, and if thou wilst be displeased, we will run the venture.* We had rather endure thy Frowns a while, than part with our sins for ever, and think it much more tolerable to be hated by the Fountain of all Love and Goodness, than abandoned of all our sinful Pleasures.

This is such Language perhaps as the boldest Sinner would hardly be able to pronounce without trembling, but yet such as it is, it is the natural Sense of every Mans Actions, who delays and puts off his Repentance : he knows that God is displeased with him, but regards it not, and as if he were ambitious of being a *Heroe* in Wickedness, he defies *Heaven*, and dallies with its *Thunder-bolts*, and runs into the Mouth of its *Canon* whilst they are spitting Fire, and roaring out Destruction upon him.

And thus you see the monstrous Wickedness of Mens delaying their Repentance, which is such, as had we not seared our Consciences, and stifled our natural Sense of God, we could never be able to reflect on without Horror and Agonies. And so I pass to the

Second Head of Discourse, the great *Ab-surdity* of delaying our Repentance ; which I shall endeavour to demonstrate in these following particulars.

1. It is putting off a Work that must be done to the most *unfitting* Season of doing it.
2. It is putting it off upon no other Reason, but what will *hereafter* be more prevalent than *now*.
3. It deprives us of the Satisfaction of having done what we must do at last, and prolongs the Pain and Trouble of doing it.
4. It defers the doing it upon no other Presumption, but that it shall one Day dearly repent of its own Neglect.
1. To delay our Repentance, is to put off a Work that must be done to the most *unfitting* Season of doing it. That Repentance is indispensibly necessary to the Recovery and Happiness of a Sinner, is a Principle wherein all the *reasonable* World are agreed ; and since it must be done, it is highly reasonable we should take the best Opportunity of doing it, and for a Man to say, I must do such a thing, and am resolved to do it, but however, I will take the most *improper* Season to do it in, is the most *absurd* and *ridiculous* Thing in the World. But for a Man to repent in, there is no Season can be so

so convenient as the *present*; for it will never be so easy for us to repent as *now*; the difficulty of it will daily grow upon our hands, and if we do not engage in it *immediately*, it will be harder to *morrow* than it is to *day*. When Men begin to sin, their *Nature* *starts* and *boggles* at it, from an *innate* Sense of God, and of their Duty, and this natural *shiness* must be tamed and broken e'er they can be *through-pac'd* in *Wickedness*; but when they have inured themselves to it by *frequent* *Acts*, they grow by degrees familiar with it, and then every *Act* breeds *Delight* in it, and every *Delight* begets a *Desire* of repeating it, and that *Desire* brings forth a *new* *Act*. And when a Man hath walked the *Rounds* a while in this *Circle*, at last he centers in *Custom* and *Habit* of sinning, and then every *new* *Act* will confirm the *Habit*, and root it deeper in our *Natures*, and so as we sin on, it will grow stronger and stronger, 'till at last it becomes almost *fatal* and *necessary*, and then the Lord have mercy upon us; for without a *Miracle* of Grace we shall never be able to retrieve our selves. Thus every step we take in our *sinful* *Progress*, leads us further out of our way, and renders our return more *hard* and *difficult*, so that by going on in a *sinful* *Course*, we do what in us lies to *block up* the way of our *Return*, and do as it were build a *Wall* behind

hind us, to disable our selves from making any Retreat. What a ridiculous Thing therefore is it for Men to pretend that they will repent, but not yet; when it is so apparent, that if they repent not now, it will never be so easie again as long as they live? To *Morrow* it will be more difficult than *now*, and every Day it is delayed, will drive it nearer to an Impossibility: So that by our *foolish Delays*, we do but make Work for our selves, and heap up *Difficulties* on our own Heads; we resolve that we will repent, but withal, that we will not go about it, till we have render'd it *more difficult*, and our selves *less* able to do it. Our Soul is wounded, and must die without the sovereign *Balsom* of Repentance, which we therefore resolve to apply and make use of; but first her *Wound* shall *fester* into a *Gangrene*, not to be cured, but by the most painful *Lancings*, and *Corrosores*. And can there be any Thing more ridiculous for a Man to resolve to do a Thing, and at the same time resolve to make it more difficult before he doth it? For certainly, if our Repentance after so many *Delays*, should at last commence, which is very questionable, it will in all probability be accompanied with so many *sad Circumstances*, so many *Tumults* of *Passion*, and *Uproars* of *Conscience*, so many *piercing Sorrows*, and *bitter Agonies*, that we shall dearly

dearly *repent* we did not *repent* sooner.

2. To delay our Repentance, is to resolve to defer this Work to *hereafter*, upon a Reason which will *then* be much more prevalent than *now*; and for a Man to defer a Thing to *hereafter* which he resolves to do upon such a Reason as will be much more prevalent *hereafter* than *now*, is doubtless the *absurdest* Thing in the World. Now the main Reason why Men are *now* unwilling to *repent* is, because they love their Sins, and are unwilling to part with them, and in all likelihood, *hereafter* they will be much more unwilling; so that this Reason will every Day improve upon their hands, and have so much the more strength, by how much the longer they defer their Repentance: So that we can have no Reason in the World against fixing on the *present* Time, but only because it is *present*; but when *hereafter* comes to be *present*, the Reason will be just the same. But as for our Unwillingness to leave our Sins, if that be the Reason of our Delay, that will every Day increase and grow more prevalent upon us; for Sin gains upon the Will by Practice, the Delight of it recommends it to the *Desire*, and renders us more fond of its Embraces; so that if we defer our Repentance till *hereafter*, because we are unwilling to leave our Sins, when that *hereafter* is present, we

shall have much more reason to deser than now ; and so the plain Sense of our deferring our Repentance upon this reason, is this, *I cannot yet forsake my Sins, because I love them, and am highly pleased with them, but hereafter I am resolved I will; but first I will act them a little longer, and grow more in love with them, and then when I love them more, and am more enslaved to them, I will be sure to hate and forsake them for ever.* Whilst therefore we *delay* our Repentance, because our Sins do please us, we shall have the same reason to *delay* it for ever. For the longer we live in Sin, in all probability, the more it will please us ; and so *Twenty Years* hence, the reason of our *Delay* will be far more prevalent than now ; and if we forsake not our sin till it ceases to please us, we shall never forsake it as long as we live: So that to resolve not to repent *now*, because our sins do please us, is the same thing in effect as to resolve not to repent at all ; and indeed this generally lies at the bottom of all such Resolutions, when mens Consciences like *importunate Creditors* begin to *dun* and *clamour* upon them, they are forc'd many times to give good Words, and appoint some *future Day of Payment*, else they will put them to a great deal of Trouble, and ever and anon arrest them with Horrors and Affrightments ; but still they purpose to run further in *Debt*, and

and to put off the Day of payment from time to time, till they are utterly *insolvent*. So that by these promises of repenting *hereafter*, Men only delude themselves, & under a *specious* Pretence of future Repentance put tricks upon their Consciences to blind and bribe them, that they may not disturb them whilst they are sinning themselves into Ruin.

3. By delaying our Repentance we deprive ourselves of the satisfaction of having done what we must do at last, and prolong the pain and trouble of doing it. To have accomplish'd a necessary Work, especially if it be difficult and important, is a *great* satisfaction to the Mind; and whereas, whilst it is yet to do, the prospect of the Pain and Labour we must undergo in doing it creates in us a great deal of *Trouble* and *Anxiety*; when once it is done, the very *Reflection* on the Pains and Labours we have past, sweetens our present repose, and crowns it with greater Joy and Triumph. And so it is with Repentance, which we all acknowledge to be a most necessary Work, and of the *vastest Moment* and Importance to us; and tho' it be never so painful and difficult, yet we must undergo it, or that which is much more intolerable; so that if once it were done, it could not but give a *great* satisfaction to our Minds, and fill us with *unspeakable Joy*. When a Man shall thus reflect with himself, *Blessed be*

be God, I have done that work, which had it been yet to do I must have done, or been undone for ever. I charged thro' all those pains and difficulties that were wont to startle and affright me, and by the grace of Heaven am come off victoriously. O happy Achievement ! how well am I rewarded for all my labour ! now I am past it, and settled in the quiet possession of my conquest ! When, I say, a Man can thus reflect with himself, it must needs be unspeakable Pleasure to him : whereas he who defers his Repentance and hath it yet to do, is in perpetual pain and anxiety ; whilst he thus considers with himself, alas, to repent is a very sad and painful work ! but yet at last I must undergo it, or suffer that which is a thousand times more painful. I must lament and weep for my folly, watch and pray against it, struggle with and overcome it, or rue for it to all Eternity. O that it were done ! but O how loath am I to go about it ! O that my pain were over ! but O how afraid am I to endure it ! Thus the poor Wretch for fear of Pain exposes himself to a lingering Tortment, and whilst by one brave Attempt he might ease himself, and set his soul at rest for ever, he languishes away his Life in misery, and is sick with the fear of his Remedy : just like some Men under the torments of the Stone, they know they must be cut or die, but the frightful apprehensions they have of their Remedy

Remedy makes them delay it from time to time. They will indure it, they say, rather than lose their Lives, but when they come to the tryal their heart fails and they must needs have a little longer respite ; and all the while they are full of pain and uneasiness, and full of *sad Apprehensions* of those severer pains they must indure in order to their recovery, and yet these at last they must indure too or that which is much more terrible to them ; whereas had they but indured them at first, they might have saved themselves all those Torments, and all those Fears of farther Torments which they indured in the time of their delay. And is not this extreamly absurd and ridiculous ? And yet just thus it is with those who put off their Repentance. Had they repented on their *first* Lapſe, their hearts might have been at ease a great while ago, and they might have saved themselves all those *gripes* and *twinges* of Conscience which they have been forced to indure. But Repentance they thought was a *sad* remedy, and the fear of that *too* augmented the torment of their disease. But be it never so *sad*, they know well enough they must at last apply it, or perish for ever. Well ; but they will apply it, that they resolve on ; but fain they would have a little longer respite. Ah foolish Souls ! will it hereafter be more easy than

than now to you? Will your *Delay* do you think mollify the pain and anguish of it? Alas no, it will rather render it more dolorous. So that all the while you delay, and think of it only but do not do it, you do but anticipate the Torment, and prolong the misery of it; and whereas if once it were done you would be at rest, and all the pain of your *past* Guilt, and the fear of your *future* Repentance would be over; whilst you only think of it but do it not, it is a *continued* Disease to you, and the very Apprehensions you have of it are many times more dolorous than the performance.

4. And lastly, to delay our Repentance is to do a thing upon no other presumption, but that we shall one Day repent of our own Action. And can there be any thing more ridiculous than for a Man to do an Action in hope that he shall live to repent of it? For either the Action is reasonable, or not, if it be, why should he hope to repent of it? if it be not, why should he be so extravagant to do it? so that for a Man to do a Thing upon Presumption that he shall repent of it, is to *proclaim* himself a Fool; and yet this is the Case of him that *delays* his Repentance. For that this very *Delay* is a Sin superadded to those *criminal Actions* of which he ought to repent, I have already

ready demonstrated; from whence it necessarily follows, that *this* must be repented of as well as *those*. So that for Men to encourage themselves not to repent at *present*, in hope that they shall repent *hereafter*, is to act professedly contrary to the reasons of Things. For if the Nature of our *Delay* is such as that we have reason to hope we shall one day repent of it; this is so far from being a proper Encouragement to it, that it is one of the strongest Reasons that can be urged against it; and for a Man to *rob* in hope to be hang'd for it, or to drink deadly *Poison* in hope to be convulsed and tormented with it, is every whit as wise and rational, as to *delay* our Repentance in hope to repent of it. For who but a *Mad-man*, or one that is resolved to act counter to all Rules of Reason, would ever practise on this *extravagant Conclusion*; *I will do this or that Action at present, in hope that hereafter I shall be sorry for, and extremely ashamed of it, and wish a Thousand times that I had never done it.* I know it is a great *Evil*, and do plainly perceive, that one time or other I shall find it so; but come what will, I will venture upon it, in hope that hereafter I shall be ashamed with the horror of it, and tormented for it upon the *Rack* of a *Self-condemning Conscience*. And now, I beseech you, is this a *reasonable Hope*, or proper Encouragement for a *wise Man* to act upon?

upon ? or rather, is it not one of the most absurd and foolish that ever any Fool or Mad-man proceeded on ? and yet this is plainly the Meaning of our Pretension, when we delay our Repentance in hope to repent of it hereafter.

And thus you see how extravagantly absurd it is for Men to defer and put off their Repentance ; so that methinks had we any Reverence for ourselves, any Respect for those reasonable Natures by which we are constituted Men, we should be ashamed to act so inconsistently with all the Rules of Reason and Sobriety ; and so I pass on to

The Third and last Head, under which I proposed to demonstrate the mighty Evil of delaying our Repentance, and that is the Danger of it ; which I shall endeavour to make appear in these following particulars.

1. Every Delay of our Repentance, is a nearer Approach towards final Impenitence.

2. 'Tis a desperate Venture of our Opportunity of Repentance.

3. It indangers the forfeiting that Grace without the Assistance whereof we cannot repent.

4. It drives us nearer to the last Extremity.

1. Every

1. Every *Delay* of our *Repentance*, is a nearer Approach towards *final Impenitence*. For a *Fatal State* is like a *shutting Pool*; in which the farther a *Man* wades, the deeper it is; and so deeper and deeper till he come to the bottom of it; and when we are there we are *subl<sup>l</sup>* beyond all hope of *Recovery*; so that at every step forward, we are in *Danger* of going beyond our *Depth*, and plunging into an *irrecoverable Ruine*. For *final Impenitence*, which is the *Consummation* and *Perfection* of all *Sin*, is nothing but a *perver-  
sing Neglect*, or *Refusal* to *repent*. And as a *Man* is always *dying*, and that which we call *Death* is only the *last and finishing* *Act* of it; so *final Impenitence* is not the *Sin* of one *Day* or *Moment*, unless it be by accident, but it is a *state of Sin*, begun as soon as ever the *Sin* is *acted*, and carried on through each *repeated Action*, and in *fact* is nothing but the *same Sin* so many times told over. But if it should happen, that he who sinned *Yesterday* should die to *Day*, it would be *final Impenitence* in him to defer his *Repentance* that *one Day*. So that our *first Delay* of *Repentance*, is the *beginning* of our *final Impenitence*, which in all its *Per-  
sons*, differs from the *Violent* only by *Chance* and *Accident*; it is materially the *same Sin*, and if *Death* chance to strike the *next Moment*, it will also have the *same Formality*. For

For as he that dies young, dies as really as he that dies after *Four score Years*, so he that dies in the midst of a short *Delay* of his Repentance is as well finally Impenitent, as he that is snatch'd away to die for ever after *Four score Years* Impenitence, for though the Evil be not so great, nor the Judgment consequent to it so heavy, yet is it as *fatal*, and as *irreversible* as the *Decree of Damnation* on the fallen Angels. So that all the Time we delay, and put off our Repentance, we are bordering on the worst of Evils, we are just upon the *Confines* of an *irreversible* Mischief, and the next step for all we know may carry us beyond Recovery. For if Death should intervene between us and to *morrow*, this Day's *delay* will be *fatal* and *irreparable*. And can we stand upon the *brinks* of this *Peripice*, and feel how the ground sinks underneath us, and yet sleep on securely, without ever thinking whither we are falling, or being in the least concerned at this *awazing* Prospect of our Danger? Methinks if we had any concern for our own safety, we should think it high time now to start up, and run away from our *neighbouring* Ruin, and not presume any longer to swim within the Circumference of this *fatal Whirl-Pool* that is every Moment sucking us in, and for all we know the next Moment may swallow us up irrecoverably.

2. Every *Delay* of our Repentance is a desperate Venture of the *Opportunity* we have to repent in, and that is this *present* Life, which is the *Day* in which we are to do our Work, the *Time* of Tryal in which we are to pass our *Probation*, and perform our *Exercise* of *Eternity*; and therefore considering how uncertain this Life is, and to how many *Events* and *Casualties* it is exposed, it must needs be a most *desperate* Venture for a Man to *delay* his Repentance. For who can tell but while we talk of repenting *hereafter*, there may be some *latent* Disease undermining the *Fort* of Life, and ready to seize the *Garrison* of our Souls; So that perhaps before *this* Day is at an end, we may be surprised in the midst of our *Delay*, and lose all our hopes of to *morrow*? For what is *vain* Man that he should talk of repenting *hereafter*, when perhaps, whilst the Word is in his Mouth, there may be an *Imposthume* in the Head or Breast, or a ripe *harden'd Stone* in his Kidney ready to drop down into his Bladder the next Moment; when he may be *inflamed* with a *Fever* by what he drinks to *Night*, or drowned in a *Surfeit* with what he eats to *Morrow*; when he may *expire* his Soul with the next Breath, or suck in *Poison* with the next Air, and so many *unlook'd* for Accidents may put an end to his talk of repenting *hereafter*,

after, and render it impossible for ever. And suppose we should be thus surprized, as many others have been before us, that while we are *merry* and *jolly* in our Sins, that all on a sudden we should be hurried away out of the Company of our *joyful* *Associates*, into that of *howling* and *tormented* *Spirits*, and from our *Songs* and *Laughter* into *weeping*, and *wailing*, and *gnashing* of *Teeth*; how should we be *blanked* and *amazed*, and with what *Horror* and *Astonishment* should we reflect upon the *woful* *Change*, and upon our own *desperate* *Folly* that was the *Cause* of it? How dare we then talk of repenting *hereafter*, who cannot command one *Moment* of *future* *Time*, nor promise our selves one *Day* longer? when for all we know the hope of *Eternity* that is *now* in our hands may be lost for ever, and drop through our fingers before to *Morrow Morning*; and we that lie down this *Night*, and sleep securely in our Sins, may before the next *Twilight* awake with *Horror* and *Amazement* in *Hell*? Blessed God! that ever any *reasonable* *Creatures* should be so *stupified*, to venture a *Soul* and an *everlasting* *Interest* on so *great* an *Uncertainty*, and rather than begin his *Repentance* to day, run the hazard of being *eternally* *miserable* to *Morrow Morning*! that he who will not trust his *Gold* one *hour* in the *Possession* of a *Thief*, nor his

his Life one *minute* within the reach of a Lions Paw, should abandon his *Soul* whole Months and Years together, to the Mercy of a Danger great enough to distract all the Wit of Mankind, did they but fully understand it! Let us therefore consider that the *present* Time only is in our Power, and that as for the *future*, it is wholly in God's; so that while we *defer* our Repentance to the *future*, we do as it were *cast* Lots for our Souls, and venture our *everlasting* Hopes upon a Contingency that is not in our Power to dispose of. For all we know, this may be the *Evening* of our *Day* of Tryal; and if it be, our *Life* and *Eternity* depends upon what we are now doing. Wherefore it highly concerns us, as we regard our own Safety, wisely to manage this last Stake, the *winning* or *losing* whereof, may prove our *making* or *undoing*.

3. Every *Delay* of our Repentance endangers the *forfeiture* of that Grace, without the Assistance whereof, we can never repent to purpose. For we can no more repent without God's Grace, than we can live without our Food. *No man can come to me*, faith our Saviour, *except the Father which hath sent me draw him*. Joh, 6. 44. But since God hath promised, that if we *draw near to him* he *will draw near unto us*. Jam, 4. 8. that if we *work out our own Salvation*, he *will work*

*in us to will, and to do, Philip. 2. 12. and that he will give the holy Spirit unto every one that asks him, Luke 11. 23.* Since I say, God hath thus intailed his Grace upon our Endeavours, Repentance is within our Power, so long as that Grace is so ; by which, if we do our Endeavour, we shall be enabled to it. He who can repent by the Grace of God, is able to repent so long as he is able to obtain his Grace to assist and concur with his Endeavours ; but if he once withdraw his Grace, and give us over to our own Hearts Lusts, then are we no more able to repent by our own natural Strength and Power, than a *Clod* of Earth is to mount up to *Heaven*, and fix it self a *glorious* Star in the Firmament : But all the time we do delay our Repentance, we are wearying out the Grace of God, which whilst we are running away from God and our Duty, follows us with Importunities to return ; but instead of complying with it, we still defer to *listen* to its Solicitations, and put it off from time to time with *false* and *empty* Promises, what can be expected but that after so many defeats and disappointments it should at last *abandon* us to our selves, and leave us to the *miserable* Fate of our own Folly and Madness ; and if once it doth so, farewell to all the Hopes of our Recovery. Consider therefore, O thou *vain* Man, that sayst thou wilt repent

repent *hereafter*; must thou command God to wait thy leisure, or fasten his Grace with such *adamantine* Chains as that it should never be able to get loose from thee? art thou sure it will be always at thy Beck, or that notwithstanding thy long Provocations, it will be ready to come to thy aid whensoever thou callest for its Assistance? for by promising to repent *hereafter*, thou dost not only promise for thy self, but for the Grace of God too, whose Assistance is as necessary to thy Repentance, as thy own Endeavour; and methinks 'tis a strange piece of Confidence in thee, to promise for that which thou hast so much disengaged, and which upon that account thou hast so little reason to trust to. 'Tis true God hath promised you his Grace, but I beseech you, where hath he promised that you shall have it when you please? or that after all his Tenders, and your scornful Refusal of it, it shall be still at your Choice whether you will at last accept of, or again refuse it? for unless you can produce some such Promise as this, you can have no reason to expect that God will still continue his Grace to you, how long soever you refuse and reject it: And if he should at last deal by you, as you have dealt by him, this will be the *final* Issue, because when he hath called, you have refused, when he hath stretched out his hand,

you have not regard, but have set all his Counsels at naught, and would not hearken to his Importunities ; therefore when you call, he will not answer, when you seek, he will not be found ; but will even laugh at your Necessity, and mock when your *Last Extremity* comes upon you. And should things be reduc'd once to this *sad Issue*, woe be to us that ever we were born.

4. And lastly, Every Delay of our Repentance drives nearer to the *last Extremity*, which is that of a *Death-bed Repentance* ; and how great a one that is, I have already shewed you at large, and given you evident Proof, that tho' it be not absolutely desperate, yet it is most fearfully hazardous and comfortless ; and yet this is the common Center to which all our *Delays* do naturally tend. We venture to sin on, because we know that if we do repent, God will have Mercy upon us, and so we do resolve upon both ; that is to sin *now*, and to repent *hereafter*. And by this Train the Devil toulus us on through all the Stages of Sin and Life, till we come to our *Death-bed*, and then when our Time and Strength is spent, we shall have all the Business of our Life to do, and being reduc'd to this Extremity, what a woful Condition shall we be in? when we shall feel our selves departing into a long Eternity of *Weal* or *Woe*, and have nothing

to bear us company thither, but our Sins and Guilts, which, if they be not cancelled in an instant, will *consign* us immediately to endless Misery ; and whether we look either within, without, or above us, shall be able to see nothing but a black and dismal Cloud hanging over us, and Causes of Fear surrounding us on every side ; how will our Heart *sink* within us, and our Soul *quiver* on our Lips to think how *naked* and *harbourless* she is left, having no other Refuge to fly to, now the *Avengers* of Blood are at her heels, but only that *wronged* and *affronted* Mercy which all her Life time she spurned and trampled on ? When we shall consider what a vast Work we have to do, how little Time we have to do it in, how our own Strength is spent, and what little Reason we have to expect that God should strengthen us by a Miracle ; in what a Tumult will our Souls be ? how shall we quake and tremble to think whither we are going ? and what will become of us for ever ? Surely if we die in our Wits, and are not *Atheists* or *Sots*, it will be impossible for us to reflect on our selves and the fearful *Risque* we are running, without extream Horror and Amazement. For we must be strangely stupified, if when we perceive our selves upon the *Confines* of *Eternity*, within a very few Moments of being Happy or Miserable for

ever, we do not awake from our Security; and if we do, the vastness of the Work that lies upon our Hands, the number of the Guilts that will *stare* us in the Face, and the little Time and Power we have to perform the *one* and expiate the *other*, must needs put our *guilty* Consciences into a fearful Agony, and *unchain*, and let *loose* all its Terrors upon us: And then how miserable will our Condition be, when we shall look about for Comfort, and see nothing but God's *everlasting* Threats ready to be fired and discharged upon us, and not one Promise opening a Door of Hope, nor any *Arm* of Mercy held forth to catch us now we are leaping down into *Eternity*; but *Hell* gaping for us as wide as our *Grave*, and both ready to receive a part of us, and our selves ready to divide our selves into those Two *sad* Habitations. O then shall we sigh and lament our *Folly*, and curse our *lingring* Delays, and wish a Thousand and a Thousand Times we had begun our Repentance sooner. This is the *sad* Extremity whereunto we are driving in every *Delay* of our Repentance; and considering all these Things, methinks these mighty Dangers whereunto our Delays expose us, should be enough to frighten the most resolute Sinner into *present* purposes of Amendment. And O would to God, that this might be the happy Effect of

of it ! that Men at last would be but so wise as to consider these things, how *monstrously* Wicked, how *shamefully* Absurd, how *fearfully* Dangerous it is for them to put off their Repentance; and that considering this they would be so kind to themselves as now at last to betake themselves to the Discipline of a severe Repentance. This I know is a Word that Men are extream frighted at, they think if once they betake themselves to Repentance, they must encounter with *vast* Difficulties, and enter into a very *dolorous* and *unpleasant* Course of Life, which while they can live merrily in their Sins, they are very loath to do. And indeed I cannot deny, but after an *habitual* Course of Sin, our Entrance into a *penitent* Life, will in all probability, be attended with a great deal of Sorrow and Disquiet, but who can help this ? it is you that have brought this Inconvenience on your selves by deferring your Repentance so long ; and assure your selves, the longer you defer it, the more difficult it will be whenever you begin. But for God's sake consider *Sirs*, which do you think will be more uneasie, to undergo the Severities of Repentance *for a Time*, or Hell Fire *for ever* ; to weep for your Sins whilst you have Hope of Mercy, to contest against them whilst you have a Prospect of Victory ; or sigh and groan for them to all

Eter-

*Eternity*, without any hope of Ease or Redemption; for whether you will or no, you must endure Repentance or Hell; and therefore since there is no other Remedy, at least be persuaded to choose that which is most tolerable, and if you do so, I am sure you must conclude, that 'tis infinitely easier to repent, than to be damned. But yet it is plain, that Men do commonly fancy Repentance to be much more grievous than it is; for could they once persuade themselves to resolve upon the Work, and seriously to engage in it, they would find the greatest part of the Trouble were over; for the main Difficulty of Repentance, lies in forming our first Resolution; this indeed will exact great Consideration, and vigorous Struggling with the wicked *Habits* and *Inclinations* of our own Natures; but when we have so far overcome our selves, as to obtain a full and clear Consent and Resolution, we have past the *main* brunt of our *spiritual* Warfare, and if we have but the Courage to keep our Ground, shall soon be crowned with the Joys of Victory, and that which seem'd at first so frightful, and terrible to us, will presently grow tolerable, and soon after easie, and after that by degrees so pleasant and delightful, that we shall prefer it before all the Pleasures of Sense, and feel our selves infinitely more blessed

blessed and happy in it, than ever we were in the midst of the highest Ravishments of our sinful Delights. Come then, my Brethren, let us stand no longer *amusing* our selves with the Difficulties, but let us seriously consider the *indispensable* necessity of it, the great Assistance God hath promised us if we will *speedily* undertake it, and the *immense* Rewards he proffers to encourage us to it, and let us never leave pressing our selves with these *Considerations*, till we have obtained of our selves a full and free consent to it, and wrought our Wills into a *serious* and *hearty* Resolution. And when we have prevailed thus far, we have gotten over the greatest *Difficulty* that lies between us and *Heaven*, and if we do but vigorously pursue our Resolution, our Work will every day grow *easier* and *easier*, and so at last it will be our Recreation, and we shall reap from it so much *Peace* of *Conscience*, so much *Joy* in the *Holy Ghost*, such a calm and sweet Enjoyment of our selves, and such a glorious Hope of a *future* blessed Immortality, as will carry us with unspeakable Vigour through all the weary Stages of our Duty, till we are arrived to our Journeys end, where all the *Sorrows* of our *Repentance* shall be *swallowed* up in *everlasting Joys* and *Triumphs*.

## LUKE XXII. 42.

Nevertheless, not my Will, but thine be done.

THESE Words are a Part of our Saviour's Prayer in his Agony; in which his Soul being at present under a *mighty* Contest with the *Powers of Darkness*, and under a *vigorous* Apprehension of his approaching Passion on the Cross, expresses an *earnest*, but yet *natural* and *innocent* Desire of Deliverance; *Father, if thou be willing, remove this Cup from me.* For his *Humanity* being now in a great measure deprived of the Supports and *comfortable* Influence of his *Divinity*, and left alone to grapple by its own *single* Strength, with the *powerful* Malice of Men and Devils, and being under a *piercing* Sense of those *mighty* Evils they intended against him, began to recoil and *shrink*, out of a *natural* desire to preserve it self; but yet this *natural* desire being perfectly under the Government of his Reason, and that as perfectly under the Government of God, He does to this Effect *address* himself to God, *Father, if it be thy Will, remove this Cup away from me.* *I do not desire in the least to controul or cross thy blessed Will in any thing, no, rather than thou shouldst suffer the least Disappointment.*

pointment in thy blessed Intentions, I am ready to undergo the utmost that the Malice of Men and Devils can inflict upon me; but alas! the Evils that I feel and fear are so exceeding grievous unto Flesh and Blood, that if it might be without Contradiction to thy Will, or Prejudice to thy gracious Intentions to a sinful World, I cannot but earnestly desire that they might be removed from me. But if there be any the least Competition between thy Designs and my Desires, so that they do not fairly agree, and perfectly consist with one another, whatsoever I endure, not my Will, but thine be done.

Behold here a most perfect Pattern of Submission to the Will of God, and that under the most dismal and difficult Circumstances. When he plainly saw it was the Will of his Father to expose him to the utmost Extremity of humane Misery, to object his naked Breast to the utmost Malice of Men and Devils; when, by the Force of a most powerful Instinct, his Nature recoiled at the Apprehension of it, and would fain have been excused; then did he supplicate on his bended Knees, that his Father would not listen to the innocent Language of his natural Fears and Desires, but that he would fully execute his own severe and terrible Will upon him; not my Will, O Father, i. e. not the Will of my natural Fear and Desire of Self-preservation, but thy Will be done; though it be to inflict

flict on me the utmost Misery that a poor Innocent, as I am, can be exposed to. The Words being thus explained, do naturally resolve themselves into this Proposition.

That God's Choices for us, are much better than our own; and consequently, that if it were in our Power to determine which of the Two should take Effect, it would be very unreasonable not to choose what God hath chose for us. The Truth of which will evidently appear if we consider these Two Things.

1. That God doth as really and heartily will what is *Good* for us, as we do for ourselves.
2. That he knows much better what is *Good* for us than we.
1. That God doth as really and heartily Will what is *Good* for us, as we do for ourselves; *i. e.* So long as we are proper Objects of his *good Will*, and have not finned our selves into an *utter Incapacity* of being beloved by him; for then the Case quite alters, and that *good Will* which he formerly bore us, converts into a *severe Resolution* of making us *dreadful Examples* to others, that so when through our own *Obstinacy* and *Incorrigibleness* he can do no more good upon us, he may do good to *others* by us, and warn them not to imitate our Actions by the *fearful Example* of our Sufferings.

But

But so long as there is any Hope of doing good upon us, he declares himself as *heartily* inclined to do good to us, as ever any Man was to do good to himself ; for what mighty Designs hath he set on foot ? What expensive Methods hath he used to save us ? in what *passionate* Strains hath he expressed his good Will towards us, and with what *restless* Importunity doth he court us to be happy ? He swears by his *own* Life, that he desires not our Ruine, but rather that we should *return* and *live*, and solemnly professes, *that he would have all men to be saved, and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth.* And when with *all* his Courtships and Addresses he cannot prevail upon our *Obstinacy*, to dissuade us from ruining our selves, he puts on the Passions of a *mournful* Friend, and with *yearning* Bowels laments our *fatal* Folly ; by all which *tender* Expressions he plainly declares, that he doth as *heartily will* our Welfare as we can do our own. But because a *firm* Belief of this Principle is *indispensably* necessary to a *free* Submission to his *heavenly* Will, I shall endeavour briefly to demonstrate the Truth of it from these *Four* Considerations.

1. That *his* Interest in us is much *greater* than *ours* in our selves.
2. That *his own Self-love* doth as *strongly*

ly incline him to *will* our *Good*, as *ours* doth to *will* our own.

3. That in concerning himself about us, he can have no *other* End to serve, than what we have in being concern'd for our selves.
4. That even that *good Will* that we bear to our selves, is only a Derivation from, and Participation of that infinite *good Will* which he bears us.

1. That *his Interest* in us is much *greater* than *ours* in our selves. If we believe *him* to be the Author of our *Beings*, we must acknowledge him to have a most *absolute* and *unalienable* Propriety in us; that what we are, as well as what we have, we hold from him who is the *Head-Landlord* and *Supream Proprietor* of all those *Beings* that are derived from him, even as *Brooks* and *Rivulets* owe all their Streams to the Fountain from whence they flow. And can we imagin him not to be *greatly* concern'd for what he hath so *great* an Interest in? or that he who hath so much *greater* Propriety in us, should have *less* Regard for us than we have for our selves? Can it be thought that the *great Father* of *Beings*, should be forgetful of his own *Off-spring*? that he who hath imprint-ed on all other Parents such a *tender Kindness* toward their *natural Issue*, should be so regardless of his *own*, as to expose them to a

*wide*

wide Wilderness, and leave them there to shift for themselves? no, doubtless the mighty Interest he hath in us cannot but in dear his Affections to us, and render him mightily concern'd for our welfare. *Can the Mother forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb?* yea, they may forget, but I will not forget thee saith the Lord. *Isai. 49, 14.* For since every thing is naturally inclined to love its own, we cannot but conclude that the God of Nature, from whom all natural Inclinations spring, hath in himself a most tender Regard for all that Family of Beings, of which he is the Parent; especially considering

2. That *his* own *Self-love* doth as strongly incline him to *will* our Good, as *ours* doth to *will* our own. For if he love himself as he cannot *but* do, being infinitely lovely; he must necessarily love what is like him, and affect to propagate his own Resemblance. But no *miserable* Thing can be like himself, who is *infinitely* happy; and therefore he cannot love to make *others* miserable, since in so doing, he must affect to produce what is contrary to himself, which implies a *plain* Contradiction. For unless he love our Misery, he cannot be *supposed* to desire it, because as I shall shew you by and by, himself can never be the better for it, and therefore if he desire it, it must be for

its own sake. But how is it possible that the same *Being* should love Contraries at the same time ; that he should at once take Delight in himself, and in what is most unlike him, or, which is the same thing, that he should be pleased with his own *Happiness* and with our *Misery* together. So that if he love himself who is *infinitely* happy, his own *Self-love* must necessarily incline him to will the *Happiness* of others ; and unless our *Happiness* might be supposed to be prejudicial to his, which is impossible, it would be an Expression of Hatred to himself to wish ill to his Creatures. In his willing *Misery* in us he would manifest himself to be displeased with his own *Happiness*, and openly declare that *Misery* was much more grateful to him ; for how can he love *Misery* for it self, as he must needs do, if he take Pleasure in ours, and at the same time love himself who is so *infinitely* happy ? This therefore we may build upon, with as much Confidence, as upon any *first Principle* in *Philosophy*, that God hath the same Reason to will our *Happiness*, as we have to will our own ; that as we would be happy, because we love our selves ; so because he loves himself, he would have us be so. He loves that others should be like him, even as every other *Being* doth that loves ; for what he loves in *himself*, he must love in *another*, and that which he loves

loves in *another* where it is, he must love to propagate to *another* where it is not; and consequently, as he must love our *Happiness*, because he loves his own, even so for the same Reason he must love to make us happy.

3. That in concerning himself about us, he can have no *other* End to serve, but what we have in being concern'd for our selves. He is so *infinitely* happy in himself, that he can neither conceive nor desire any *Good* for himself, beyond what is contain'd within the *Immensity* of his own *Being* and *Perfections*; so that now he can have no *Self-ends* to serve, because he doth already enjoy all *possible* Degrees of *Perfection* and *Happiness*, and so can desire nothing without himself as an *Addition* to his own *Beatitude*, which is so *infinite* already that it will admit of *no* Increase. From hence therefore we may be assured that he can have no *other* Reason to concern himself about us, but only to do us *Good*, for to do us *Mischief* cannot be his End, because he can do himself no *Good* by it, his *Happiness* being already so compleat, that it cannot possibly need our *Misery* either to increase, or to serve as a *Foil* to it. 'Tis only *Want* and *Indigence* that make one Being desire the *Misery* of *another*. If I desire to rob *another* of his *Happiness*, 'tis to increase or to secure my own; if I desire to make *another* miserable, 'tis either to preserve my

self from being so, or to procure my self that ill-natur'd Comfort of having a Companion in Misery. But God by the boundless Happiness of his Nature, is infinitely raised above all such *mean* Considerations, and therefore cannot have any Temptation in his Nature to do *any* Thing but *Good* to his Creatures. But doth not the Scripture tell us, that he doth all things for his own *Glory*, and that he obtains this End as well by *punishing* as by *rewarding* his Creatures? Very true, but then it is to be considered, that the *Glory* he aims at, consists not in receiving of any *Good* from us, but in doing and communicating of all *Good* to us: For infinite Goodness can no otherwise be *glorified* than by its own Overflowings, and free Communications, and it can no otherwise be *glorified* in the Punishment of its Creatures, but only as it doth *Good* by it; for should it punish without *good* Reason, it would reproach and vilifie it self; but if it doth it for *good* Reason, it must be because it is *good* either for it self or others: for it self it cannot be; for how can an infinitely happy Being reap any *Good* from *another*s Misery? and therefore it must be for the *good* of others, either to reduce *those* who are punished, or to warn *others* by their Example from running away from their Duty and Happiness. So that to do *Good*, is the End of God's Punish-

Punishment, and because it is so, he is *glorified by* it ; and considering that he is so *infinitely* happy, that he can no ways serve himself by our Miseries, it is impossible he should have any other End in concerning himself about us, but only that *great and God-like* one of doing us good, and making us happy. For the very Notion of an End includes *Good* ; and therefore since the End of God's Concern about us, cannot be his *own Good*, it must necessarily be *oars*.

4. And lastly, That even that *good Will* that we bear to our selves, is only a Derivation from, and Participation of that *infinite good Will* which God bears us. For it is plain, that our *natural Instincts*, and *Propensions*, must be derived from the *same* Fountain with our Natures, and consequently that God is the *Author* of both ; and if so, then that *unquenchable Self-love*, and *Thirst after Happiness*, which is implanted in *our Natures*, must needs be derived from him, and owe its *Original* to some *overflowing Spring* of *Love and Benevolence* in his *Bosom*. For what should move him so to contrive the Frame of our Natures, as that we cannot but love our selves and breath after our own Happiness, but only his own *good Will* to us, and *tender Care* of our Happiness ? What *other End* could he propose to himself, in stamping this *vehement Propensity*

sion in our Natures, *only* to excite us by it to be careful of our selves, and to pursue our *own* Interests? Doubtless if he had not loved us *more* than we love our selves, he would never have caused us to love our selves as we do since he could have no other aim in causing us to do so, but only to oblige us to *befriend* our selves, and contribute all we are able to our own Welfare. And since it was out of *mere* Love to us that he made us to love our selves, and our *own* self-love is nothing else but a *Ray* and *Participation* of his Benevolence towards us, we may be sure it is *purer* in the Fountain than it can be in the Channel, that it is much more *intense* and *vigorous* in his Bosom than in our own. For as the *natural* Love of all Parents towards their *Off-spring* is, a plain Instance of the *indulgent* Care which the *great Father* of Beings hath for *all* his Children, that he hath committed them in their Infancy to such *tender* Nurses as will be sure to take care of them when they cannot provide for themselves; that he hath not intrusted them to the Compassion and *good* Nurture of other Beings, to be maintained by the Alms and Benevolence of their *fellow Creatures*, but hath taken security for their *liberal* Nature and Education from the *inmost* Bowels of their Parents; so that *vehement* Propension of Self-love which

God

God hath implanted in us is a most genuine Signature and Impression of his Benevolence towards us, and shews how careful he was of us thus to take security of our selves for our *own* Welfare, and to oblige us to be happy by the most *tender* and *vigorous* Passion in our Natures. By all these considerations I think it is as clear as the Sun that God doth heartily love us, and hath as *unfeigned* a *good-Will* for us, as we can have for our selves; so that unless we can suppose that we are better able to chuse for our selves than he, we have at least as much Reason to acquiesce in his Choices for us as in our *own*. It is plain he is as much our Friend as our selves, and therefore tho' what he *wills* and *chooses* for us may in some particulars appear very *harsh* and *severe*, yet that his Intention is *good*, and that he means as well towards us as we can towards our selves; and therefore if in the Event it prove not as well for us as our *own* contrary Will and Choice would have done, we may be sure that it was not want of *good Will* to us, but for want of Skill to choose what was best for us. But if it appear that he doth not only wish as well to us as we do to our selves, but also that he knows how to choose for us a great deal *better* than we, then we have all the Reason in the world to acquiesce in his Choices how *grievous* soever

they may appear to us, and to joyn heartily with our *Saviour* in this excellent Petition, *not our wills, O Father, but thy Will be done,* Which brings me to  
§ 2. The second general Head of discourse, that as God hath as good a Will to us as we have to our selves, so he knows much better what is *Good* for us than we. And to prove the Truth of this it is sufficient, that God *infinitely* exceeds us in Knowledge and Understanding, he being *Omniscient*, and having all Things before him in one *intire* View and Prospect, whereas we see but *in part*, and know but *in part*, and are extremely shallow and superficial in our Conceptions of those Things that lye before us, which must necessarily render us *infinitely* less capable of judging what is *Good* for our selves than he. And this will more plainly appear by *particular Instances*, of which I shall only produce these five:

1. That we many times know only what is *Good* for our selves *singly*, but God knows what is *Good* for us as we are *Parts of the Whole*, and in *Conjunction* with it.
2. We many times know only what is *Good* for us with respect to such a *particular End*, but God knows what is *Good* for us in the *main*.

3. We

3. We many times know only *this* or *that* to be *Good* for us *singly* and *apart* by it self, but God knows whether it be *Good* for us in *Conjunction* with those *Concomitants* and *Consequents* that are necessary to it.
4. We many times know only what is *Good* for us in respect to our *present* Temper and Disposition, but God knows what is *Good* for us in Reference to our *constant* and most *abiding* Disposition.
5. We many times know what is *Good* for us with respect to this *present* State of Things, but God knows what is *Good* for us in Reference to our *eternal* Condition. In all which Instances I doubt not to make it appear that God is much fitter to choose for us, than we for our selves.
1. That we many times know only what is *Good* for our selves *singly*, but God knows what is good for us as we are *Parts* of the *Whole*, and in *Conjunction* with it. Man is naturally a *sociable* Creature, and as *such* can never be happy alone. His Musick is always best in *Consort*; when it consists of *numerous* Voices, every one bears a Part with every one. And since our Nature is such, as that we are not comparably so well pleased with *solitary* as with *sociable* Fruitions,

ons, it is every *single* Mans Interest that his own *private* *Good* should not be separated from the *Good* of the *Whole*; that it should not grow like a *Wen* by ingrossing the Nourishment that is due to all the *other* Parts, but rise and increase in such *just* Proportions as is consistent with the Happiness of all the Rest: and there is no man whatsoever that hath the *least* Spark of Generosity in him, but to contribute to a *Publick* *Good* would joyfully submit to a great many *private* Inconveniences, and would reckon his own *personal* Dammage fairly compensated by the Advantage that the *Publick* receives by it. But so *narrow* and *confined* is our Prospect of things, that in our *private* Choices we many times ignorantly separate our own Interest from the *Publick's*, and choose *that* for *our selves*, which, should we obtain, would *prove* very *injurious* to the *Whole*. We would fain change our *present* Condition for some *other* which we have Reason to believe would be much more *advantageous* to us; but should we obtain our Desire, it may be the *Publick* would be much *more* injured by it, than *our selves* could be benefited. Perhaps we are fittest to do *Good* in our *present* Station, or, should we remove, some *unworthy* Person may get *in* in our Room, or *some* Person that is *more* *worthy* than *our selves* may be displaced by us;

us ; and by a thousand other ways which we are not able to comprehend, our *shifting* of Places may so *puzzle* and *disorder* the *well-laid* scene of Affairs, that had we foreseen it at first we should much rather have chosen to keep where we are. Again, we lye under the sense or Apprehension of some *great* Calamity, and doubtless if we might *choose* for *our selves* we would immediately be delivered from it ; but did we always *foresee* how much *Good others* may reap from our Sufferings, how much our *private* Infelicity may conduce to the *Weal* of the *Publick*, I hope we should not be such *narrow-spirited* Persons as for the sake of our *present Ease* to neglect so fair an Opportunity of being *publick* Benefactors to the World. But now God hath such an *intire* Prospect of all Things before him, that he plainly sees all the *little Clashings* and *Interferings* of Mens *private* with the *Publick Good*. And as he knows that we *cannot* be *happy* alone, so he resolves that we *shall not* ; for he never wishes any Mans *private* Good separately from that of the *Publick*, but in one *steady* Drift he carries on the Interest of each *single* Part in *Conjunction* with the Interest of the *Whole*. And hence in the Prosecution of *single* Ends we see he is not always wont to proceed in the most *direct* and *compendious* Way, but often times winds about in a *large* Circuit,

in

in which he infolds and takes in a thousand concurrent and subordinate Designs ; and drives them all at once before him in the Course and Series of his Providence. And tho' in this general Drift of Things, the Concerns of particular Men are sometimes set forwards, and sometimes backwards, in Pursuance of the main Design ; yet all at last conspires in the publick Good, whereof each Particular hath a share. And therefore tho' for a publick Good we sometimes suffer a present Inconvenience, yet since we cannot be happy but in Society, it is much better for us that we should be damaged than the Publick ; because the Happiness of each particular Member redounds from the Welfare of the whole Society, and is necessarily involved in it : And did we but rightly understand our own Interest, we should never esteem any Thing Good for our selves that is a Nuisance to the Publick, because whatsoever this suffers, I and every Man suffer ; and unless I could be happy alone, that can never be for my Interest in particular that is against my Interest in common. Since therefore the Happiness of every Part is included in that of the Whole, and consequently whatsoever promotes the Publick Good is beneficial to each particular Member ; it hence necessarily follows that God can choose much better for us than we. For whereas gene-

generally our Foresight is limited within the narrow *Horizon* of our own *particular* Concerns, by reason whereof we cannot many times avoid choosing *against* the *common* Interest, God hath the whole *series* of Things before him, and so must necessarily see even from the Beginning to the End what is for the *publick* Interest and what not; and therefore since he who is *sole* *Administrator* of the *publick* *Bank* of *humane* Interest knows how to make the *best* Improvement of it, it is doubtless much *more* *advantageous* for us that he should manage all our *particular* *Shares* of it, then that we should reassume them into our own *Hands*, and manage them separately by *themselves*: And tho' under *his* *Conduct* and *Management* we suffer some *present* *Inconveniences*, yet so long as we are sure of *this*, that the *Publick* *Good* requires it and is promoted by it, we have all the Reason in the world to be satisfied. And this was the *Case* in the *Text*; the *Inconvenience* which our *blessed* *Lord* did *here* so earnestly deprecate was *indispesibly* *necessary* for the *Commonweal* of *Men*, in which himself had a *large* *Share*, being a *Member* of the *Corporation* of *Mankind*; so that had *God* granted his *Desire*, and excused him that bitter *Cup* he drank, not only *Mankind* in *general* but himself in *particular*, as he was a *Man*, would have been very much *damnified* by it; for he would

would have been deprived of those *Felicities* which he now enjoys in *common* with us as he is the *Head of a glorious Church*, whom he redeemed and purchased with his Blood. He would have fallen *short* of that *Mediatorial Dignity* to which he is now advanced, and lost the Satisfaction of being the *Author* of our Happiness, and seeing the *blessed Fruits* of the *Travail* of his Soul ; by all which he hath been abundantly compensated for those *momentary Sufferings* he endured. So that in the Issue we see it was *well for him* as well as for *us* that the Will of God took place, his own *personal Share* in the *common Happiness* of Men being enough to recompense him a *thousand Fold* for whatsoever he suffered to procure it. Upon this Account therefore it is best that God should choose for us, because he always chooses what is *Good* for us in conjunction with the *Publck*, in the *Prosperity* whereof all our *particular Welfare* is involved.

2. We many times only know what is *Good* for us with respect to such a *particular End*, but God knows what is *good* for us in the *main*. The *Generality* of Men we see are so *rash* and *precipitant* in the *Pursuit* of their *particular Ends*, that they commonly overlook those *Things* that are of more *general* and *Catholick Concern* to them, and run themselves upon a *thousand Inconveniences* for the *sake*

fake of such *particular* Goods as can never make them any reasonable Amendments. Thus in our *worldly* Affairs, how often do we endanger our *main* Interest by snatching *too* greedily at some *present* Good? We think if we had it, it would serve *such* a Purpose and conduce to *such* a *desired* End; but when we have it, it proves a Mischief to us, and disappoints us of other Ends and Purposes which are of much *greater* Weight and Moment to us: And I believe there is no Man that hath been but a *diligent* Observer of his *own* Affairs, but hath found by Experience, that *many* of those Things which for *such* or *such* Purposes he hath earnestly coveted, have proved in the *main* extremely prejudicial to him; that either his *Health* or his *Estate*, his *Peace* or his *Reputation*, which are the *main* Ingredients of our *temporal* Welfare, hath been very much impaired by the Acquisition of some of those Goods which he hath most impatiently longed for. And how often have we seen Men *impoverished* by those Pleasures, *disgartered* by those Profits, made *infamous* by those Honours, and *unhealthful* by that Ease which they have doated on, and pursued with the greatest Impatience? So fond are we generally of our *little particular* Ends, that in the prosecution of them we seldom consult our *main* Interest! we consider only that *this* or *that* Good will serve *this* or *that* Pur-

Purpose, and so we immediately let fly our Desires and Endeavours after that, without ever inquiring whether it will not be more prejudicial to us in general, than it can be beneficial in *this* or *that* particular ; in which Case if we had but our own Wills, we should many times ruin our selves for Trifles, and sacrifice all the Happiness of our Lives to the *present* gratification of some *fool* and *unreasonable* Desire. But now God in the Conduct and Management of our Affairs considers our *whole* Case, and hath *all* our Circumstances together in his View, and so cannot but know whether *this* or *that* particular *Good* be consistent with our Welfare in the general ; and whereas we, like Men in a *Fever*, do for our *present* Ease and Refreshment oftentimes long most impatiently for what is most *hurtful* and *injurious* to us, God, like a wise *Physitian*, consults our *future* Health more than our *present* Ease, and having an *infallible* Prospect of our *whole* Case and Circumstances, suits all his Prescriptions to the Necessities of our Condition, and not to the *blind* Impatiencies of our Appetites and Longings. He many times plainly sees that what we desire would be our *Bane* ; and therefore out of *tender* Mercy chooses rather to deny us than to destroy us. That *Patient* would be accounted very *unreasonable* that should fall out with his

his *Physician* for disturbing his sleep when he is inclining to a *Lethargy*, or denying him *Drink* in a *Fever* or a *Dropsey*; because tho' what he desires is *good* for those *particular Ends* of his present *Ease* and *Refreshment*, yet it is apparently *destructive* to him in the main. Thus doubtless it would have been very well for *Joseph*, as to many *particular Ends*, not to have been *sold* by his *Brethren*, or *imprisoned* in *Egypt*, and doubtless had it been left to *his* own *Option*, he would much rather have chosen to continue at *Home* under the *Care* and *Patronage* of an *indulgent Father*; but had he seen, as *God* did, from the *first Link* of the *Chain* of his *Fate* to the *last*, and how inseparably his *After-advancement* was connected to his *present sufferings*, in the *Course* and *Series* of *Things*; he would doubtless have willingly chosen as *God* did for him, since tho' the *contrary* had been well for him in some *particulars*, yet *this* was much better in the *general*.

3. We many times know only *this* or *that* to be good for us *singly* and *apart* by it self, but *God* knows whether it be good for us in *Conjunction* with those *Concomitants* and *Consequents* that in the *Course* of *Things* are necessary to it. For the *divine Providence*, which runs thro' all *Things*, hath disposed and connected them into such a *Series* and

Order, that there is no *single* Event or Accident, (but what is purely *miraculous*) that depends not on the *Whole*, and hath *innumerable* Causes antecedent to it, *innumerable* Convergencies going hand in hand with it, and *innumerable* Consequents attending it. But so narrow and *confined* is our prospect of Things, that we only see that part of their *Series* and Order that is at present before us; and there are *innumerable* Things both *concomitant* and *consequent* to every Event that are out of the *sphere* of our Cognizance; by Reason of which it is impossible for us to make any *infallible* Judgment either of the *good* or *evil* of almost any *Event* that besals us; because, tho' we may be secure that such an Event *single* and *apart* by it self may be *good* or *evil* for us, yet for all we know, in the *whole* series of Things there be such *concomitant* or *consequent* Events inseparable to it, as may quite alter its Nature, and reader that Evil which considered *singly* may be *Good* for us; or that *good*, which considered *single* may be *Evil*. So that in our Choice of Events we are necessitated for the most part to choose in the *dark*, because we see *so* little of the *whole* Series of Things, and of the Circumstances wherewith Events are accompanied and attended, that it is not in our Power to determine which is *good* or which *bad* for us. We many times look

look on such an Event as *highly* good for us and *extremely* desirable, and believe that if we could compass it we should be *extremely* happy; but *poor, short-sighted* Creatures that we are! we *see* neither the Company, nor the Train of it. If this Event doth befall us, according to the Series of Things, a *thousand others* must, and what they will prove we are not able to *prognosticate*, and for all we know the Mischief of *them* may abundantly outweigh the Benefit of *this*; and did we but foresee all that goes along with and all that must follow it, we should be many times *most* afraid of what we *most* eagerly desire. This therefore being our Case, how extremely unfit are we to make Choices for our selves, since it is almost an *equal Lay* whether what we choose will prove our *Food* or our *Poison*. But God being the *supreme* Orderer and Disposer of things, must needs have them altogether *intirely* in his View; and having the first Link of the whole Chain of Causes in his own Hands cannot but plainly see all the *intermediate* ones from the Beginning to the End. And since his *Power* is the Cause not only of all *actual* Events but even of the Possibility of those that shall never be *actual*, he must needs discern the *utmost* Issues of every *possible* as well as *actual* Event, and see the *remotest* Effects and Consequents that are in the *Wombs* of all *actual* and *possible* Causes

and Principles; and having all Things that *are*, or that may *be* in his View, he doth not only see what is *good* or *hurtful* to us, but what would be so if it were *actual* and *existing*. So that He needs not try Experiments upon us to know what is *beneficial* or *injurious* to us, because the Operation and Consequence of every *possible* Event is as obvious to his *all-comprehending* Knowledge *before* as *after* it is befallen us. And hence it is impossible for him to be mistaken in his Choices; because he knows as well before hand what Things would *be* if they *were*, as what they *are* when they actually exist. And tho' we may sometimes pervert the Nature of Things by our Abuse of them, and make that *Evil* to us which is really *Good*; yet God cannot be mistaken so as to prescribe us for *Physick* what is in its own Nature *Poison*; and consequently if he love us but as *well* as we love our selves, as I have demonstrated he doth, he must needs choose better for us than we; because he sees the *utmost* Consequents of all that doth or can befall us, and so cannot be imposed on by shews and *false* Appearances as we often times are. And of this I shall only give you one Instance, which is that of good old *Jacob* when he lost his Son *Joseph*, which we plainly see by the Sorrow he expressed as it was an Accident that happened *sore* against his Will, and which he would

would have gladly prevented had he been but aware of it. But it is plain the *good* Man saw but a *little* way into the Series of Things; he saw his Loss, but he saw not the *Issues* of it, for doubtless had he beheld that Train of *happy* Consequents that was *chained* and *annexed* to it, how it tended not only to *Josephs* Advancement but to the Preservation of *himself* and *his* Family from the *en-suing* Famin; he would doubtless have been more a Friend to *himself* and a Father to *his* Family than to have *countervoted* God in his Choice and Election for him. But it was well for *Jacob* that God saw farther into the Consequents of Things than he; for if he had not, not only *Joseph* had missed of his Preferment, but *himself* and all *his* Family had been in a great *deal* of Danger of *perishing* in the Famin. So that when all is done, you see the *wisest* Course we can take is to *resign* up our selves into the Hands of God, who seeing the *utmost* Issues and Consequents of Things can never be mistaken in choosing what is *best* for us.

4. We many times know only what is *Good* for us with respect to our *present* Temper and Disposition, but *God* knows what is *good* for us in Reference to our *constant* and most *abiding* Condition. We are a *Sort* of Creatures that are extremely *fickle* and *immutable*, our Humours change upon every *new* Occasion, and our Desires, like

the *Weather-cocks* look *contrary Ways* upon every *contrary Wind*; now we are of *one Mind*, and *by and by* of *another*; this seems to us *now*, and *anon* the *quite contrary*, and often times in the *same Hour* we are *several Sorts of Men*. But still we choose according to our *present Temper*, and so still as *this alters*, our *later Choices* thwart and run a *Tilt* at our *former*. So that should every Thing happen to us that we desire and wish for, we should be the most *miserable Creatures* in the *World*, since what we choose in *this Hour* we should reject in the *next*, and what we longed for *to Day* we should be sick of *to Morrow*. And since no *Man* certainly knows *now* what mind he shall be of *anon*, for all that he can tell, *that which* is most agreeable to him *now* may be most disagreeable to him *then*, and if he should change his *present Mind*, as it is very likely he may, he will *immediately* unwish *what* he now wishes for, and *dearly* repent of what he most heartily chooses. How then is it possible that we should choose *well* and *wisely* for our selves, all whose *Choices* do depend on a *Temper* that is so *everlastingly fickle and variable*? But now *God*, who foresees what our most *constant, lasting, and durable Temper* will be, is much better able to *adapt Events* to it, and to contrive all our *Circumstances* into a *fair Accommodation* with it; and tho' it is impossible but he must sometimes

times crosses us, because our *Humours* do so vary, and we do so often cross and contradict our selves; yet knowing best what our *standing* and *permanent* Temper will be, he must needs know best also what will be most *constantly* convenient for us and agreeable to us. For if he be *cordially* our Friend, as it is apparent he is, he will not so much consult the Gratification of our *peevish*, *fickle*, and *unconstant* Humours, as of our most *permanent* Temper and Disposition; and if he know much better than we what our most *permanent* Temper and Disposition will be, as it is apparent he doth, he must needs be much abler to suit and accommodate it with convenient Events and Circumstances. Of this you have a *remarkable* Instance in the *Method* of Gods conducting *Israel* out of *Egypt* into *Canaan*. Doubtless had *They* had their own *Choice*, they would have been immediately translated from their *miserable* Bondage into that *happy* Land; but God knew their *standing* Temper better than they did their own; he saw they were a *stupid*, *stubborn*, and *untractable* People, and as yet wholly incapable of such a *propitious* Change, and that if he had conducted them into *Canaan* directly and in a *Moment*, they would have presently forgot their Benefactor, and let loose themselves to all *Licentiousness* and *Wickedness*; which must have naturally shortened their *Prosperity* and hastened it in-

to an *untimely* Ruin; And therefore God saw it necessary to continue them some time longer in *Egypt*, that so by his *mighty* Works there he might awaken their *stupid* Minds into an *awful* Sense of his Majesty and Power. And when by his *outstretched* Arm he had brought them out of *Egypt*, he made them wander about *Forty Years* in the *Wilderness*; whereas had he led them directly *on*, a very *few* Days Marches would have brought them into *Canaan*. But he considered their *stubborn* Temper which was not yet capable to bear a *prosperous* Condition, till it was thoroughly disciplined for it in the *School of Affliction*; till it was *broken*, and *tamed*, and *civilized*, and rendered more tractable and obsequious. And tho' in *this* Dealing with them, he acted quite contrary to their *present* Humour and Desires, yet did he act most advantageously for them, considering their *standing* Genius and Temper; for had he transmitted them into *Canaan* with all those *barbarous* Conditions that they brought out of *Egypt*, their Prosperity would have only *heightned* their Infolence and hastned their Ruin: And accordingly *Deuter. 8. Moses* tells them at large, that all Gods Severities to them in the *Wilderness* were to dispose them for the *happy* condition of *Canaan*; to *prove* and *polish* them, to *break* and *humble* their *untractable* Spirits, and do them *good* in the *latter End*; as you may see

see verse 2, 3, 5, 16. And if God choose to do what is best for us with respect to our *standing* Temper and Disposition, we have no reason to complain that he *sometimes* crosses our more *fickle* and *variable* Humours and Fancies.

5. And lastly, We many times know only what is *Good* for us with respect to this *present* State of Things, but God knows what is *good* for us in reference to our *eternal* Condition. For we being a Sort of Creatures that are born to live *for ever* in *eternal* Weal or Woe, it is really a Matter of very *small* Moment to us whether we are *happy* or *miserable* here; 'tis no more than a *short* Nights Dream of Pain or Pleasure to a Man that hath *four score* or a *hundred* years to consume in Delights or Torments: and when we *awake* in *Eternity* all that is past will seem a Dream to us in the Presence of those *never ending* Ages of *Joy* or *Misery* before us. But yet so *fond* are we generally of the *present*, that we most commonly choose without *any* Regard to the *future*. In our Choice of Objects we seldom project beyond our *present* Pleasure; if the Thing will but please us *now*, we rarely trouble our Heads to inquire what Influence it may have on our *eternal* Pleasure or Pain; yea, and many times if we should, it would be to no purpose; because in most of those *Goods*

Goods we choose and covet there are a thousand Snares we cannot discern, as well as a thousand Advantages which we are not aware of. In those Evils and Calamities which we run *away* from, we are not able to foresee how many Ways our souls may be in-dangered by those *outward* Goods we covet, nor yet how many *spiritual* Blessings those *outward* Evils may be pregnant with at which we are so startled and affrighted: so that in most of *our* Choices we can look no farther than our *present* Convenience, but what Effect they may have upon our *ever-lasting* Fate we can never certainly know till the *Event* hath determined it. Thus in this *great Lottery* of *Goods* and *Evils* we *short-fighted* Creatures are fain to choose at a Venture, and till the *Event* hath determined what our Choices are, we know not whether they are *Blanks* or *Prizes*. So that if we always had what we choose, God only knows the Mischief that would follow upon it; for to be sure every Man would choose to be *prosperous*, and if every Man were so, how many *Thousands* would perish *for ever* for want of the *saving* Remedy of *Affliction*, which is as *indispensably* necessary to the reclaiming of *some* Persons and putting them into a Capacity of *Happiness*, as *Food* is to satisfy our Hunger, or *Nourishment* to sustain our Lives. Lord! what miserable

miserable Creatures then should we be, shouldst thou be so regardless of us to allow us our Wills, who having so *small* a Prospect beyond *this* State of Things should many times for the sake of a *present* Convenience choose what might occasion our *eternal* Woe? But God being our *best* Friend must needs be supposed to intend our *main* Interest, which being lodged in our *eternal* State, he must needs be much *more* concerned *about* than about our Happiness and Conveniences in this *present* Condition; nor indeed would he be *our* Friend should he advance our *present* Interest to the prejudice of our Souls and *immortal* Concerns. So that if he love us, as we are *most* sure he doth, the *main* Drift and Design of his Providence over us must be to secure our Happiness in the *World to come*; and when *this* cannot be secured but by the Damage of our *earthly* Enjoyments, it is Mercy and Kindness to us to fling that *Lumber* over-board to save our *precious* and *immortal* Freight. But he having a *most* *perfect* Intuition of the *inmost* Nature and *utmost* Consequents of Things, can not but discern all those Stops and Turnings where our *temporal* and *eternal* Interest do clash and interfere with one another; and having a *perfect* insight of all their Competitions, where the *one* cannot be advanced without the Depression of the *other*,

other, he must needs know *infinitely* better than we how to prefer our *main* Interest, and to choose what is best for us. For he knowing best what our Temper is, and what the Consequents of things are cannot be ignorant of what is best for us and most conducive to our eternal Interest; whether *Prosperity* or *Adversity* be safest for our Souls, and most for the Security of our *Vertue* and *Innocence*; and knowing this he can so accomodate all Events to our *spiritual* Necessities, as that they shall all work together for our eternal Good. And if at any time he sees it necessary for our *spiritual* Good to instruct us by Rods, or to discipline us by Affliction, it is infinite Mercy in him to cross our *blind* Wills by interrupting our beloved Ease and Prosperity. And if we saw but what he sees when he corrects and chastises us, and knew the Reasons of his Actions; we would doubtless beseech him to do as he doth, and whilst we were smarting under his Lashes, we should be adoring his Goodness for making such wise Provision for our Welfare. Thus when *David* was hunted like a *Partridge* on the Mountains by those successive Afflictions which God let fly at him, he doubtless concluded him self to be very severely dealt with, and would God but have allowed him to choose his own Fate, he would much rather have chosen to have lived in

in an *uninterrupted* Calm of Prosperity, than to be exposed, as he was, to the *incessant* Storms of an *adverse* Fortune. But when Experience had better instructed him what were the Reasons of God's Actions, how necessary they were to *correct* his Follies, and *curb* the Extravagancies of his Nature; he was then plainly convinced that God had dealt much better by him; than he would have dealt by himself; and was forced to acknowledge that it was *well* for him that he was afflicted; *for before I was afflicted, faith he, I went astray; But now have I kept thy Commandments.* Psal. 119. 67.

So that by all these Instances you plainly see that God can choose much *better* for us than we for our selves, and therefore if to this you add what hath been so largely proved, that he is as *heartily* our Friend as we can be our own, it will from hence *necessarily* follow that it is much *better* for us, that his Will concerning us would take Effect, than any *contrary* Will or Desire of *our own*.

What then remains, but that with *all* Cheerfulness and Alacrity we resign up our selves into the Hands of God, and submit *all* our Choices and Desires to his *heavenly* Will; *who* having as *unfeigned* an Affection for us, as we can have for our selves, and a much *better* Prospect of our Affairs than *we*; must needs manage our Concerns to much

*greater*

greater Advantage than it is possible for us to do. Why then should we *murmur* and *repine* at any thing that befalls us? are we *wiser* than *God*? no; or can we pretend to be *more* careful of our *Interest* than he is? neither. In the Name of *Goodness*, what would we be at then? Would we have him *resign up* our *Concerns* to our selves, and not *intermeddle* any farther in our *Affairs*? *God* forbid, that either *he* should have so *little* *Regard* of us, or that *we* should be such *Traytors* to our own *Interest*. For on this side *Hell* I know nothing more *formidable* than for *God* to let us *alone*, and give us *up* to our own *Wills* and *Desires*. And if I should hear him thus bespeaking me from the Battlements of *Heaven*, *O foolish Creature*, *since what I do will not please thee*, and thou art *so dissatisfied* with my *Conduct* and *Management*, *from henceforth I will cross thy Desires no more*, but let the *Event* prove *good* or *bad*, *I will comply with thy Choices*, and order all *things* to happen to thee according to thy own *Will*: I think I should look on my self as the most *forlorn* and *abandoned* *Wretch* on this side *Hell*, as *one* utterly excluded from the *greatest* *Blessing* that belongs to a *Creature*; and if I had *any* *Hope* of his *Reacceptance*, I would on my *bended Knees* *resign back* my self, and *all* that concerns me into his *Hands* again. I would beseech him above

above all things not to leave me to my self, not to throw me from his Care, or *discharge* me from his Conduct; and if I could prevail with him to take me *again* into his Care and Protection, I would promise never to repine against him more, but *chearfully* submit to his *heavenly* Will how severly soever he should think good to deal with me. And this not only I, but every Man else would do, that truly loves *himself*, and understands his own Interest, for where can our Concerns be *better* or *safer* lodged, than in the Hands of that *infinite* Wisdom that knows what is *best* for us, and that *infinite* Goodness that wills what it knows *best*, and of that *infinite* Power that doth what it wills? Why then should *any* Man be displeased that *his* Affairs are not managed his *own* way, when we are so sure of *this*, that they are managed by One that hath much *more* Skill to manage them than we; and One that having the *same* Love for us that we have for our selves, will be sure to manage them to the *best* Advantage? And since there is the *same* Benevolence towards us in God's Will, that there is in *ours* towards our selves, how much *better* is it for us that *his* should take Effect that is guided by such an *infallible* Wisdom, than *ours* that hath nothing to conduct and steer it but a *blind* Sense, or at best, a *short-sighted* Reason. Wherefore tho'

our

our Affairs go never so contrary to our Wills in this *present* State of Things, yet this we may build upon, that it is *best* that Things should be as *God* will have them. And as when we are grown *up* to the Age of Men, we thank our Parents for those *loving* Severities they Exercised towards us when we were Children, and not *able* to govern our selves; because *then* we see, that if they had let us had *our* Childish Wills, and given the Reins to our *wild* Passions and Appetites, we should in all Probability have undone our selves: so when we come to our *full* Stature in Christ, and are grown *up* into a State of Perfection, then we shall see Reason to *admire* and *praise* the Goodness of *God* for those *merciful* Denials and *kind* Severities, upon the Account of which we now murmur and repine against him; and be fully convinced that it was *happy* for us, that we were not suffer'd to be *our own* Carvers, but had all *our* Allowances carved out to us by the *wise* and *gracious* Providence of our *heavenly* Father. Whosoever therefore we are crossed by his Providence in any of *our* Desires, let us but consider how *unfeignedly* he loves us, and how *much* more fit he is to chuse for us than *we*, and then we shall see *infinite* Reason to *acquiesce* in his Providence, and to joyn with our *Saviour* in this *excellen*, *Prayer*, *Father*, *not our Wills*, *but thy Will be done.*

MAT.

MATTHEW XVI. 24.

*Then said Jesus unto his Disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me.*

**I**N the 21. Verse our Saviour declares to his Disciples, that it was necessary for him to go up to Jerusalem, and there to suffer many things, and to be killed, and be raised again the third Day. Upon which St. Peter rebukes him v. 22. saying, *be it far from thee, or as it may be render'd, be propitious to thy self; this shall not be unto thee.* But Jesus considering that this was the Work he came into the World for, tartly rebukes him, *get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an Offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of Men.* i. e. thou talk'st as if thou didst not yet understand what God hath foretold of me, *viz.* that I shall be advanced to my Kingdom by my Sufferings, and as if thou wer'st merely guided by Rules of humane Policy; according to which, to expose ones self to Calamities and Death, is a very odd way to Glory and Empire. But I tell thee, Peter, that it is not only certain that I must suffer

in order to my Advancement, but that those also that will come after me, must deny themselves, and take up their Cross and follow me. In the management of which Words, I shall endeavour these Three Things;

1. To shew you what is here meant by *denying our selves*.
2. What abundant Cause and Reason there is for it.
3. How absolutely necessary it is to our eternal Happiness.

1. What is here meant by *denying our selves*. In general, by *our selves* here we are not to understand our Nature, considered as it is the Creature and Workmanship of God; for God hath endowed us with  *rational* Faculties, and stamp'd *immutable* Principles of *Reason* upon our Minds; which Principles we are so far from being obliged to renounce, that they are the *fundamental Laws* of our Nature, by which we ought to regulate all our Motions and Actions. By *our selves* therefore we are to understand *our sinful selves*, or our *corrupt* Nature as it is under the Power and Dominion of *wicked* Principles and Inclinations; for so *our selves* doth in Scripture many times denote *our sinful and corrupt selves*. And so 2 Tim. 3. 2. 'tis made a *Character* of *bad Men*, that *they should be lovers of their own selves*; whereas in strictness to *love our selves* is so far from being

ng a Fault, that it is a *necessary* Instinct of Nature, and the Root and Principle of our *Virtue*. By loving *our own selves*, therefore must be here meant, being *indulgent* to the *vicious* Inclinations of our Nature, as he explains himself in the following Words, *being Covetous, Boasters, Proud, Blasphemers, &c.* And accordingly Christ is said to have *died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves*; i.e. to their *corrupt* Principles and Inclinations; *but unto him which died for them, 2 Cor. 5. 15.* By *our selves* therefore here we are to understand every thing in us that is opposite to *God*; every Motion and Inclination of *our Nature* that stands in Competition with *his Will*, and doth *any* way contend with *his Authority*. For the *Soul of Man* is a *Throne* to which *God* and its *corrupt* *Nature* are *Rivals*; *God* claims it by a *natural* and *essential* *Right*, as he is the *Sovereign* of *Beings*, and the *Lord* of the *Creation*; *Corrupt Nature* claims it without any *Pretence* of *Right*, but like a *bare-fac'd Usurper* derives its *Propriety* from its *Possession*, and *will rule*, because it *will*, and because it hath got *Strength* and *Interest* enough to *support* its *Dominion*. So that to *deny our selves*, is to *renounce* *our corrupt* *Nature*, and to *refuse* to be *governed* by it, and *wholly* to *resign up our selves* to the *Government* of *God*; to *abandon*

don those *evil* Inclinations which are God's Competitors in us, and would countermand his Will, and usurp his Dominion. In a Word, to deny *our selves*, is to give away *our selves* from *our selves* to God, to put *all* our Powers of Action out of *our own* Disposal into God's, and not to suffer *any* Desire or Inclination of *our own* to take Place of *his* Will, or prevail against *his* Authority. And therefore as they are said to *deny* God who reject his Authority in Compliance with the *corrupt* Inclinations of their Nature, *Tit. 1.16.* so they may be truly said to *deny themselves*, who refuse to gratifie those their *vicious* Inclinations in Compliance with the Will of God. In short therefore, to *deny our selves*, is to prefer God's Will before *our own*, to *sacrifice* our Inclinations to our Duty, and in *all* Competitions between *him* and *our Carnal* Interests and Affections to take *his* Part, and follow his Command and Directions.

2. I proceed to the Second Thing proposed, which is to shew you what *abundant* Reason there is for *this* Duty; and this will evidently appear if we consider seriously how much *more* advantagious it is in all respects, for Men to be ruled by God, than by *themselves*; to follow *his* Will, and comply with *his* Pleasure, rather than give up *our selves* to the Government of his Rival, *viz.* the Appetites and Inclinations of *our own*

own corrupt Nature; which will evidently appear in these following Particulars.

1. By thus denying *our own* Will in Compliance with the Will of God, we shall choose and act with much more Ease and Freedom.
2. We shall choose and act with much more Evenness and Consistency.
3. We shall choose and act with much more Peace and Satisfaction.
4. We shall choose and act with much more Prudence and Conduct.
5. We shall choose and act with much more Security of the Event.

1. By denying *our own* Will to comply with God's, we shall choose and act with much more Ease and Freedom. He that makes *his own* Will his Law, is upon every new Occasion put upon new Deliberations, and upon every Change of Circumstances is fain to change his Will, and to consult new Choices and Resolutions; in debating of which, he is commonly so maz'd and bewilder'd with cross Thoughts, and opposite Counsels and Deliberations, that he hardly knows which way to determin himself, and is more at a loss what to resolve upon, than how to execute his Resolution. And being thus clogg'd and incumber'd in the whole Course of his Motion, how is it possible he should act with any Ease and Freedom? But

now when once a Man hath renounced *his* own Will, and intirely submitted himself to the Direction of God's, he is *free* from this Toil and Incumbrance. For the Will of God as to all the *material* Parts of our Duty is so plainly revealed, that an *honest* Mind with *little* Enquiry may be *soon* informed, and satisfied about it; and when once it is *so*, all its Choices are already determined, so far as they are concern'd in the Matter of its Duty; for God's Will being *his*, he no sooner knows that, but he rests in it immediately with a *free* Assent, and *uncontrovuled* Approbation, and whatsoever the *Event* be, he is fixed to one *steady* Course of Motion, being resolved *once for all*, whatever happens, to do as God would have him. So that when once a Man hath intirely denied *himself*, and put himself out of *his own* Disposal into God's, God chuses for him, and thereby frees him from *all* the Trouble of doubting, and deliberating, and disputing *pro and con*, of being distracted between *contrary* Reasons, and bandied *to and fro* by *cross* and *opposite* Importunities. For now his Soul acquiescing in God, as in its proper Place and Element, doth *no more* dispute, *no longer* waver between *Two* Load-stones, but being *unison* with God, resounds and echo's to *his* Will, and freely follows him without heliberation.

2. By

2. By denying *our own* Will to comply with God's, we shall choose and act with more Evenness and Consistency. For so long as Men live in *Subjection* to the Principles and Inclinations of their *corrupt* Nature, 'tis impossible they should act evenly and consistently with themselves ; for our *corrupt* Nature is wholly governed by the *Goods* and *Evils* that are without us, and without our Power and Disposal ; by *Gain* and *Loss*, by *Ease* and *Pain*, by *Applause* and *Disgrace* ; and therefore all its Pleasures and Displeasures must be as *Casual* and *Contingent* as the *Goods* and *Evils* are from whence they do arise. And whilst we are governed by such *casual* Things as these, we are not *our own* Men, but do live in Subjection to a *foraign* Power, and must be what these Things that govern us will have us ; we must turn as the *Wind* blows, and like *Water* take our *Forms* from the Vessels we are poured into. And while the Passions and Appetites that *over-rule* us are thus *over-ruled* by the Chances and Contingencies without us, we must of necessity be as *various*, as *fickle*, and as *multiform* as they ; we must put on as many Humors as Fortune doth Countenances, and shift our Pleasures and Displeasures upon every Turn of her Wheel ; in a word, we must be as *various*, *inconsistent*, and *contradictory* to *our selves*, as the Chances and Accidents

dents are that do befall us. Now what a wretched State is this, for a Man to be never the same, but be continually *wreathing* and *distorting* his Humour into all the antick Figures of his *outward Condition*, which change and vary almost every *Moment*? Doubtless *that* Man will find enough to do, that shall undertake to make *Faces* after an *Ape*, but he will find a great deal more that will needs be *aping* an *inconstant Fortune* through all its *Grimaces* and *Changes* of *Counenance*.

But now he that hath throughly learned to deny *himself*, and to submit intirely to the Government of God, is *all* of a Piece, and throughout *even* and *constant* with himself. He is for the main, the *same* Man when he *loses* as when he *gains*, when he is *reproached*, as when he is *applauded*; and the reason is, because he governs *himself* not by the *uncertain* Contingencies that are *without* him, but by the *immutable* Will that is *above* him; and while he doth so, he knows that his Happiness is as much above the reach of the *impotent* Malice of Fortune and Men, as the *Moon* is above the *Noise* of those *impertinent* Curs that sit yelping and barking at her from below. And being under the Command of *one* Rule, which is the Will of God, and *one* End which is the Enjoyment of God, he goes evenly on in a *calm* and

com-

composed Current of Action through *all* the Changes and Vicissitudes without him; and *all* his Motions and Designs, Choices and Prosecutions continue as *uniform* and *consistent* with themselves in the midst of the *various* Contingencies of this World, as the *Sovereign* Will is that commands and determines them.

3. By denying *our own* Will to comply with *Gods*, we shall *choose* and *act* with much more Peace and Satisfaction. So long as a Man governs himself by the Appetites and Inclinations of his *corrupt* Nature, 'tis impossible he should ever be satisfied with *himself*; for besides that *his own* Reason will reproach and upbraid him with the *natural* Filthiness and Turpitude of his Actions, and represent them to *himself* as *shameful* and *inglorious*; besides which, I say his own Conscience will be *ever* and *anon* vexing and plaguing him with *anxious* and *unquiet* Thoughts and Reflections. For God hath imprinted a *Dread* of *his own* Power and *Majesty* so *deep* upon our Natures, that with *all* our Arts we are not able to deface and obliterate it; and tho' for *some* time perhaps we may suppress and stupifie it, yet in *despight* of *our selves*, it will *first* or *last* return again upon us, and avenge the *Affronts* and *Violences* we have offered it. Whilst therefore a Man sides with his *corrupt* Nature against *God*,

God, it is impossible he should be *throughly* satisfied with himself; for either *his* Reason will be upbraiding him with the filthiness of his Actions, or *his* Conscience will be alarming him with the Vengeance that is due to them.

But when once a Man hath *throughly* denied *his own* Will and Affections, and entirely resign'd up himself to the Government of God, he will be able to produce God's *own* Will and Command for the Warrant of his Choices and Actions; and this will effectually discharge him at the *Tribunals* of *his* Reason and Conscience. For *why* should *our* Reason shame, or *our* Conscience terrifie us, so long as we *choose* and *act* in Subordination to God? for so long as we do *thus*, our Will and Actions are *his*, and being cloath'd in the *Livery* of *his* Authority, are thereby sufficiently protected both from *Shame* and *Fear*. For *why* should I be ashamed to do as God wills me, whom I know to be the *Standard* of all Perfection? or *why* should I be afraid to do as God wills me, whose Will is so entirely *righteous* and *good*, that I am sure it can never be displeasing to *his* Nature? Whilst therefore I *choose* and *act* in Submission to God, what should hinder me from being as *courageous* as Truth, and as *confident* as Innocence it self? for so long my Conscience must not only *acquit* me, but

reverence me. So that now my Soul which heretofore lived in *Thunders*, and *Lightnings*, and *Storms*, will dwell above 'in a serene *Aether*, and there breath nothing but *calm* and *gentle* *Thoughts*; and instead of those *uneasie* *Reflections* that were wont to disturb my *pleasant* *Scenes* of *Mirth*, I shall be continually entertained with the *silent* *Melodies* of a *clear* *Conscience*, and crowned with the *Applauses* of *my own* *Mind*.

4. By denying *our own* *Will* to comply with *God's*, we shall choose and act with much more Prudence and Conduct. Did we understand either *God* or *our selves*, we could not but be sensible that it is much more for *our Interest* to be governed by *his Will*, than by *our own*; for tho' there is no doubt, but we wish *well* to *our selves*, and would not wifully prejudice *our own* *Interest*; yet it is to be considered, that there is the *same* *Benevolence* towards us in *God's Will*; besides which, *God's Will* hath an *infinite* *Wisdom* to steer by, which sees through *all* the *Intrigues* of *our Interest*, and hath an *intire* *Prospect* of *whatsoever* can *hinder* or *advance* it. Whereas *our Wills* are generally guided either by a *blind* *Sense*, or by a *short-sighted* *Reason* that many times mistakes *our Interest*, and directs us to *Rocks* instead of *Harbors*. And when the *Disadvantage* on *this side* is so *great* and *apparent*, how can we ima-

imagine our selves so *safe* under the Government of *our own* Wills, as we are under the Government of God's? He would have us do *this*? and we would do the *quite contrary*; and yet we acknowledge *his* Will is as *kind* and *benign* to us, as *ours* is to *our selves*. Why then, which of the *Two* Wills do we think is the *Wiseſt*? God's sure we will all acknowledge. Is it not then much *safer* for us to take the *Sun* for our Guide, than to grope by the *twinkling* Light of a *Glow-worm*? While we follow *our own* Will, every Step, for all we know, may plunge us into *Bogs* and *Quagmires*; but while we follow God's, we *choose* as wisely for our selves, as an *infinite* Wisdom can direct us. So that what *our* Will chooses may be *good* for us, but what *his* Will chooses must be *so*; and therefore to be sure when ever we *choose* contrary to *him*, we choose against *our own* Interest. I am as confident of this, as of any *Principle* in *Nature* and *Religion*, that whatsoever God commands me to do, he must certainly know that it is for my *Good*, and that is the Reason why he commands it; and if it be, then this I am equally sure of, that whensoever I *act* contrary to *his* Command, I run from a *certain* Benefit, to a *certain* Mischief. But while I *submit* my Will to God's, I am guided by God's Wisdom, and in every

genu-

genuine Act of Obedience, I am as *infallible* as *Omniscience* it self. Whilst therfore I am in the *Exercise* of my Duty, I am sure I am *safe*; because I am under the Direction of a Will that can never be *misled*, and so can never *mislead* me. And had any Thing he commands been *hurtful* to me, I know he is *so good* that he would never have *enjoyned* it; yea, had any Thing been but *indifferent* to me, I know he is *so wise* that he would never have *concern'd* himself or me about it. And if he hath commanded me nothing that is either *hurtful* or *indifferent* to me, it is doubtless *richly* worth my while to obey him even in the *smallest* and most *inconsiderable* Instances.

What a *mighty* Advantage therefore have those *happy* Persons who have intirely renounced *their own Wills*, and submitted themselves to God's? for whilst others, *poor Wretches!* do grope about under the Conduct of *their own blind Wills*, and do they know not *what*, and go they know not *whither* themselves, but *live by Chance* and *act at Random*; *They* are conducted in all their Choices and Actions by an *all-wise* Will that never fails to measure their Actions by the *best Rules*, and point them to the *best Ends*. So that while they move by the Directions of that *heavenly Guide*, they are *sure* of their Ends, and do know *infallibly* before hand, that

that *all* their Choices and Actions shall finally conspire in *their own* Happiness.

5. And lastly, By denying *our own* Wills, to comply with *God's* we shall *choose* and *act* with much more *security* of the Event. One of the great Causes why Men's Minds are so *unquiet* and *anxious*, is, that they are not able to discover the *Events* of *their own* Designs and Actions, and it is *this* that makes them so *doubtful* and *tremulous* in their *Motions*, and Causes them to *act* with so much *Caution* and *Anxiety*; because they are not able to *spy* into those *hidden* Events that lurk in the *Womb* of their Designs. Now while Men give *up* themselves to follow the *Inclinations* of *their own* *corrupt* *Nature*, they cannot but be *fearful* of *ill Consequents*, especially when they consider, that the *Consequents* of their Actions are in the *hands* of *God*, against whom they are in *Rebellion*. For our *Understanding* being our *leading Faculty*, and the *Eye* that is to *direct our Practice*, it is impossible that whilst *that* doth either *disapprove* or *doubt* of our Actions, we should ever be able to *act* with *Steadiness*, and *Assurance*: For while a Man *acts* with a *misgiving* *Mind*, and that which should be the *Guide* of his Actions is *dissatisfied* with his *Way*, he walks like a *benighted Traveller* in a *dangerous Road*, and is fain to *feel out* his *Steps*, and *tread* *cautiously*, lest

he

he should stumble into a *Bog*, or a *Precipice*. Whilst therefore a Man knows that his Actions are *displeasing* to God, and considers that the *Events* of them are in God's hands, he must be very *unreasonable* if he expect to be *blessed*, and *prospered* in them; he must either conclude, that God's *Displeasure* is nothing but a *dead* and *ineffectual* *Passion*, or that his way of *expressing it*, is by *Smiles* and *Endearments*. So that whilst we take part with our *corrupt* *Nature* against God, we can never have any *rational* *Security* of the *Events* of our Actions, but must see *abundant* *Cause*, if we do not wilfully shut our Eyes, to be afraid of *every* *Thing* that happens to us; because *nothing* can happen to us, but by his *Disposal* whom we daily incense and provoke by our Actions.

But now he who hath sincerely resigned up himself to God, knows enough of the *Events* of *his own* Actions to set his Heart at Rest, and keep his Mind in a *quiet* *Enjoyment* of it self; for he acts with the *full* *Consent* and *Approbation* of his Mind, and hath no *by-ways* from the *Road* of his *Reason* and *Conscience*; but keeping straight forwards, as he doth in the *plain* *Tracts* of *eternal* *Goodness*, he treads firmly and boldly, being *secure* of the *Ground* he goes upon, and is neither *ashamed* nor *afraid* of *his own* *Acti-*

Actions ; which being such as his *best* and *purest* Reason approves, have the *cheerful* *Euues* and *Applauses* of his Conscience continually *echoing* and *resounding* after them. And when a Man is well satisfied that his *Ways* are pleasing to God, he may *chearfully* expect, that the *End* and *Events* of them will be *blessed* and *prosperous* ; he may build upon it, that God will *first* or *last* express the *Pleasure* he takes in his Actions, by crowning them with a *happy Success*, and that how *grievous* soever any *present* Event of his *righteous* Actions may be, yet there is a great deal of *Righteousness* in it ; because it proceeds from the *righteous* *Lord*, who loveth *Righteousness* ; and that in the winding *up* of the Bottom, that which *now* seems most *grievous*, will be found most *beneficial* to him. For suppose I had an *infallible* *Physitian*, whom I know to be my *Friend*, constantly attending on me, and ordering my *Diet*, my *Physick*, and my *Exercise* ; how *securely* should I live, and how *chearfully* should I follow *all* his *Rules* and *Prescriptions* ! should he order me a *course* or a *distastful* *Diet*, I should thus conclude with my self ; well I am sure *this* is for my *Health*, and how *nau-  
seous* soever it be at *present*, I know I shall be the better for it as long as I live ; and this would render it very *grateful* and *palatable*. Should he prescribe a *strong* and *painful* *Pur-  
gative* ;

gative; I should thus conclude, well, this is to remove or prevent a Disease that will be much more painful than all the present Gripes and Twinges it gives me, and I am sure it will have its Effect, and set me perfectly at Ease within a very few Moments; and this Consideration would turn my Pain into Pleasure. In a Word, should he impose upon me a toilsome and laborious Exercise, I should resolve thus within my self; well, tho' I stretch and sweat for it now, I shall certainly be the better for it anon, and reap many Years Health and Vigour from my present Toil and Weariness; and this Reflection would convert a Drudgery into a Recreation. And yet this is the *real* Case of those Men, who have intirely denied *their own* Wills, to choose and act in subordination to God: For he is an infallible Physician, and they have made him their Friend by submitting themselves to him, and putting *their* Lives and Interests in his Hands; and therefore since as he is God, and their Friend, he cannot but know and design what is good for them, they have all the Security in the World, that every thing he orders them, shall conduce to their good, so long as they follow *his* Prescriptions, and that he will order them nothing, but what they would order for themselves, if they were but as infallible as he is, and did fulfil comprehend all his Reason; and in a word, Y that

that tho' *this* or *that* Event may be for the present very *troublousm* in its Operations, yet if they do not hinder the Effect of it by their own Irregularity, it shall certainly conduce to their *everlasting* Health and Happiness. And under *this* Perswasion, how chearfully may a Man bear *up* under all Events, and welcome the *worst* that can happen to him; for being secure of the *infallibility* of God's Skill, and of the *sincerity* of his Kindness to him, he hath *abundant* Reason to conclude, that since all Events are under God's Disposal, he will take Effectual Care, that nothing shall happen to him but what is for his *good*. For while his Will is subject to God's, his Condition is a Thousand Times more safe and secure than if God's Will were subject to his; because tho' there be the *same* Benevolence to him in both, yet *his* Will might mislead God's, but God's Will cannot mislead his.

And thus I have endeavoured to represent to you the *abundant* Advantages that do arise from *Self-denial*, *i. e.* from renouncing *our own corrupt* Will and Inclination, and intirely submitting *our selves* to the Will of God; which are such as, one would think, should prevail with any Man that doth but love *himself*, and sincerely respect *his own* Interest. For this is as *certain* a Truth, and as much confirmed by Experience, as any

Max-

*Maxim in Philosophy*, that there is no state of *humane Life* in which a *Man* can be *happy*, whilst his own *corrupt Will* is his *Law*; nor none in which he can be *miserable*, whilst he is *intirely resigned and devoted to the Will of God*.

3. I now proceed to the *third and last Thing proposed*, which was to shew you how absolutely *necessary* it is to our *eternal Happiness*, that in *Obedience to God*, we should deny *our own Will* and *corrupt inclinations*; and this will evidently appear if we consider

1. That the *Disposal* of our *Happiness* is not in *our own Will* but *God's*.
2. That the *Standard* of our *Perfection* is not *our own Will* but *God's*.
3. That the *Conformity* of our *Nature* to our *Happiness* consists not in what *we will*, but in what *God wills*.
4. That the *essential Acts and Ingredients* of our *Happiness*, are not what *we will* but what *God wills*.
1. That the *Disposal* of our *Happiness* is not in *our own Will*, but in *Gods*. If we would be *everlastingly Happy*, we must comply with that *blessed Will* upon which our *everlasting Happiness* depends; and the *Apostle* assures us, that *eternal Life is the Gift of God*. If it were in our *Power* to support and defend our selves in a *blisful Existence*

to all Eternity, we might with *some Confidence* set up for *independent Free-willers*, and live as we list ; and after we have followed the Swing of *our own corrupt Inclinations* in *this World*, promise to our selves an *Eternity* of Happiness in the *other* : But alas, we are a sort of *poor precarious Beings*, that are beholding to God for *every Breath* we draw, and for *every Moment* of *our Existence* and *Duration* ; and if he should withdraw from us the *vital Influence* of his Providence but for the *Twinkling* of an *Eye*, we should be so far from continuing *happy*, that we should vanish into *nothing*. And therefore if we intend to be *happy for ever*, it is necessary we should submit our selves to *his Will*, upon whom every *Moment* of *our Being* depends. For when *meerly* by withdrawing his *Arm* from us, he can let us drop into *nothing* when he pleases, how can we hope, when we will not be ruled by him, to be upheld by him in a *happy Being for ever*? can we think that the *wise* and *holy Governor* of the *World* will be so *regardless* of *his own Authority*, as to *sustain* and *uphold* his *Subjects* in their *Rebellions* against him ; unless it be with a *design* to reduce them, or to make them *everlasting Monuments* of *his Vengeance*? No, no ; since our *Being* and *Well-being* doth *for ever* depend upon him ; we may build upon it, that either he will  
be

be obey'd by *us*, or that he will not so *uphold us*, as to encourage us in our Rebellion; and consequently, that if he doth *uphold us* *forever*, as he hath declared he will, it will be with a *dreadful Purpose*, *viz.* to continue us in an *everlasting ill Being*, and hang us *up* in *Chains* for *publick Spectacles* of his *Vengeance*, that all his *Creation* may take warning by us. Wherefore if we are resolved to adhere to *our own Will* in Oposition to *God's*, it is in vain for us to aspire after a *happy Being hereafter*, unless we can find some way to deprive *God* of the *Disposal* of it and secure it in *our own Power*. For so long as *God* remains the *sole Arbitrator* of *our Fate*, we must make *his Will* ours, or renounce all our *Hopes of Happiness*.

2. It is to be considered that the *Standard* of our *Perfection* is not *our own Wills*, but *Gods*. For the *Faculties* of every *Nature* being the *Senses* by which it *perceives* and *enjoys* its *own Happiness*, it is impossible we should ever enjoy a *perfect Happiness* so long as the *Faculties* by which we are to enjoy it are *imperfect*. Ours therefore being a *rational Nature*, all whose *Motions* are under the *Direction* of an *understanding*, and the *Command* of a *free Will*, is framed and designed for a *rational Happiness*; which it is as *impossible* for us perfectly to *enjoy* whil't our *rational Faculties* are out of *Order*, as it is

to perceive the Pleasures of delicious Meats, and Sounds, and Odours whilst the *Senso-  
ries* of our *Tast*, and *Smell*, and *Hearing* are discomposed and obstructed by any *bo-  
dily* Disorder. But now while we follow *our  
own* Will in Contradistinction to God's, our *rational* Nature is all over out of *Tune*; for whereas according to the *true* Order and Constitution of *our* Nature, our Understanding is to *guide* our Will, and our Will to command *all* our Passions and Appetites; so far forth as *our* Will swerves and deflects from Gods, it goes *Quite* counter to the Principles of its *own* Reason and Understanding, and subjects it self to the Dominion of *those* Passions and Appetites which it ought to command; it *chooses* and *refuses* by the Inclination of its Affections, and not by the Directions of its Reason and Conscience; which is the reason of that *Civil War* there is between the Law in its *Mind* and the Law in its *Members*, that is between its Reason and Conscience, and its *corrupt* Lusts and Inclinations; because while its Will takes Part against God, it sides with its Lust against its Reason, and whilst it doth so, it will be so far from being *happy*, that it will be continually at War with its self, and its Will and its Conscience, will be perpetually clashing with *one  
another*. For so long as a Man goes against his Reason, his Reason must necessarily go against him, and be continually reproaching and

and upbraiding him, and vexing his Mind with severe and angry Reflections. And how can a Man enjoy himself, whilst he is *thus* divided; or how can he *enjoy* the Happiness of a *rational* Nature, whilst he is *thus* divided from *his* Reason, and lives in *perpetual* Variance with it? A Body may as soon be at *Ease* whilst its Bones are *out of* Joint, as a *Soul* whilst its Faculties are *thus* broken and divided. If ever we would be *happy* with our Reason about us, we must be *all of a piece* with our Reason; that is, our Will must be *rational*, our Affections must be *rational*, and our Actions must be *rational*; if they are *not*, our Reason will be as much *against them* as they are *against it*, and so there will be an *everlasting* Broil and Mutiny within us. Till therefore we are *throughout* perfectly *rational*, that is, till *all* our Faculties are *intirely compliant* with our Reason, it is impossible we can *ever* be perfectly *happy*; and tho' we had power enough to defend our selves from all *hurtful* Impressions from *without*, and to *ward off* the Blows not only of *Devils* and *Men*, but even of *God* himself; yet so long as *our* Reason and *our* Will are at Variance, our Will will be a *spightful* Devil to us, and our Reason an *angry* God. So that while we are *imperfect*, you see, we cannot be *happy*, and while we follow *our own* Will against God, we cannot be *perfect*. For to follow *God*

and Right Reason, saith the Philosopher, is the same thing; and to present our selves, saith a far greater Author, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, is our reasonable service, Rom. 12. 1. For the Will of God being invariably determined in all its Choices and Refusals, by the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of his Nature, must be the most perfectly rational Will in the World, and as such, the Standard and Pattern of all other Wills; and therefore so far as our Will doth deflect from his, it must necessarily be imperfect and irrational: But while I govern my Will by his, and do choose and refuse by his Commands and Prohibitions, I follow the Pattern of my Perfection; and while I follow his Will which is a most perfect Transcript of his Nature, I transcribe his Perfections into my own. For while I am copying his Will I am imitating his Nature, and while I am imitating his Nature I am growing into his Likeness and Resemblance: And when once my Will is all god-like, and its Affections and Inclinations are perfectly conformable to God's, then I am perfectly rational, and then shall be perfectly happy. For now as I resemble God in his Perfections, I shall resemble him in his self enjoyment; my Reason will be perfectly satisfied with my Will, even as God's Reason is with his; and my Nature will be a fair and beautiful Prospect to my Understanding, even

as God's Nature is to his. I shall contemplate *my own* Graces with a *transcendent* Pleasure and Delight, and while I alternately turn my Eyes upon God and *my self*, and compare *Grace* with *Grace*, and *Beauty* with *Beauty*, I shall feel, as he doth, a *Heaven* of Content and Joy springing up in my Bosom. Thus by denying *our own* Will, you see, and submitting to God's, which is the *Standard* of *our* Perfection, we naturally grow up into *Blessedness*; whereas by following *our own* Wills in Opposition to God's, we fatally sink *our selves* into *Wretchedness* and *Misery*.

3. It is also to be considered that the Conformity of our Nature to our Happiness consists not in what *we will*, but in what God wills. To make us *blessed* it is not only necessary that there should be *blisful* Objects for us to enjoy, but that our Minds should agree with and be *contempered* to them; for unless we are *affected* suitable to the *Worth* and *Excellency* of them, all the *Objects* of *Heaven* cannot make us *happy*. For as Delicacies are *grateful* only to *delicate* Palats, and Musick to *musical* Ears; so the glorious Entertainments of the *World to come* are a *Heaven* only to *heavenly* Minds; For to dwell with a *God* whom I do not *love*, and to be confined to a *Society of Spirits* whose *Temper*s I am *averse to*; to be put upon Exercises against which I have an *Antipathy*, would be a *tedious* Constraint instead of a *free* Enjoyment

ment; so that before ever *Heaven* can be a *Heaven to me*, my Mind must be tuned and adapted to its Joys and Beatitudes. And this is not to be effected by following *our own* Will but *Gods*; for *our* Will as it stands in Opposition to *God's* is either a *sensual* or a *devilish* one, or both; and 'tis either *Covetousness* or *Luxury* which are the *Lusts* of the *Flesh*, or *Pride* or *Malice* which are the *Lusts* of the *Spirit*, that sway and determine it in all its *Choices* and *Refusals*; both which are as repugnant to the *heavenly* Enjoyments as *Light* is to *Darkness*, or *one* contrary to *another*. For between a *spiritual Heaven* and a *carnal Mind*, a *divine Heaven* and a *devilish Mind*, there is an *irreconcilable* Distance; and for *such a Mind* to live happily upon *such a Heaven* is as impossible in the nature of the Thing as it is for a *hungry Wolf* to fill his Belly with *Syllogisms*, or to satisfy its Appetite upon a *Lecture of Philosophy*. Whilst therefore we give way to our *corrupt* Will and Inclination we do contract an *Antipathy* to *Heaven*, and do what in us lies to prepossess our own Minds with an *implacable* Aversion to all its Joys and Beatitudes. We take an *effectual* Course to *antidote* our Souls against *true* Happiness, and to secure our Minds from being ever touch'd and affected with the *divine* and *spiritual* Pleasures of the *World to come*. So that

that if we are still resolved to take part with our own *wicked* Will against *God*, we were best take our Pleasure while *we* may have it, while we live among these *sensitive* Enjoyments that suit with our *brutish* Appetites and Affections; for when we go hence into the *Spiritual World*, that will be like a *barren* Wilderness to us, where we shall find nothing to live upon, but be forced to pine away a *long* Eternity under a *desperate* Hunger and Dissatisfaction. But if we heartily resign up our selves to *God*, and prostrate our Wills to his, we shall thereby quickly acquire a *heavenly* Frame and Disposition. For the proper Business of all those Duties he requires at our hands is to *dress* and *prepare* our Souls for *Heaven*, and make us *meet* to be *partakers* of the *inheritance* of the *Saints* in *light*. 'Tis by these that he *carves* and *polishes* our Natures, cuts off the Roughnesses and Unevennesses of our Temper, and squares us into fit *Materials* for the *heavenly* Building. *For this is the Will of God*, saith the *Apothle*, even our *sanctification*, *1 Thess. 4. 3.* That is the purging our Nature from all its *Aversion* and *Repugnancy* to the *Blessedness* of *Heaven*, and the inlaying it with all those *divine* Dispositions wherein our *Conformity* with *Heaven* consists; for so our *Saviour* explains it, *Jo. 12. 50*; *I know that his commandment is life everlasting*; that is, that

that what he commands, is the *Seed* and *Principle* of everlasting *Blessedness*: That it is the *Charity* and *Humility*, the *Righteousness* and *Temperance*, and *Self-resignation* which he commands, which do *attemper* our *Minds* to the *heavenly* State, and by which we are to *relish* the *Joys* and *Pleasures* of it *for ever*. For it is these *Virtues* that do *reconcile* our *Appetites* to *Heaven*, and without these, our *Souls* can *no more* relish the *Joys* of it, than our *Palate* can *Sweet-meats* while it is over-flowed with *Gall*. Unless therefore we will deny our *corrupt* *Will* and *Affections*, and submit our selves to *God*, it is *Nonsense* for us to talk of going to *Heaven*; for *Heaven* it self without a *heavenly* *Disposition* to relish it, is a *tasteless* and *insipid* Thing, and it is as possible to please a *blind* *Man* with the *Beauty* of *Colours*, and a *deaf* *Man* with a *Consort* of *Musick*, as to gratifie a *vicious* *Mind* with its *divine* and *spiritual* *Enjoyments*.

4. And lastly, It is to be considered, that the *essential* *Acts* and *Ingredients* of our *Happiness* are not what *we will*, but what *God Wills*. It is a *great* *miltake*, to imagine that the *Happiness* of *Man* consists in *external* *Possessions*, or in being seized of a *great* *Plenty* of *outward Goods* of any kind what-soever; whether they be *earthly* or *heavenly*. It is not the *possessing* the *outward Goods* of this

this *World*, but the enjoying them that makes any Man *happy*; and if I had *all* the *World* in my *Possession*, no more of it could go into *my Happiness* than just what I enjoy; all the rest would be like the *Possession* of a *great Mountain of Sand* which I could neither eat, nor drink, nor apply to *any* of my *Needs* or *Conveniencies*: So that the *Possession* of *outward goods* is *good* only as it is in *Order* to the *Enjoyment* of them, abstracted from which, it is altogether *indifferent* whether I am possessed of them or no. But now 'tis by *our own Actions* that we do enjoy the *Goods* we are possessed of, by applying them to the *Needs* and *Conveniencies* of our *Nature*, and by the *Content* and *Satisfaction* we take in the *Application*. So that in short, our *Happiness* is not in the *Goods* that are *without us*, but in the *Enjoyment* of them that is *within us*; that is, in those *Acts* of *Fruition*, by which we *feel*, and *perceive* them. And thus if we were possessed of all those *outward Goods* that *Heaven* abounds with, they could signify nothing to our *Happiness*, unless we had an *inward Enjoyment* of them, and by proper *Acts* of *Fruition* did *taste* and *perceive* their *Beauty* and *Delightfulness*. So that all the *Happiness*, you see that *Heaven* or *Earth* can afford us, is immediately lodged in *our own Acts* of *Enjoyment*, without which, neither the *Possession*

fection of *Wealth* and *Honour* upon Earth, nor of the *Presence* of God, and *Saints*, and *Angels in Heaven* can make us in the *least* degree happy. Since therefore our *Happiness* is so immediately lodg'd in *our own Acts*, it will hence necessarily follow, that those *Acts* by which the *Goods* of *Heaven* are to be enjoyed are the *Acts* of our *future Happiness*. Now the *chiefest Goods* of *Heaven*, being *God*, and *Saints*, and *Angels*, and *our Selves*, the *chiefest Happiness* of *Heaven* must consist in those *Acts* by which *God*, and *Saints*, and *Angels*, and *our Selves* are enjoyed; and by what *Acts* can these be enjoyed; but by *Godly*, *Saintly*, and *Angelical Ones*? 'Tis by *Worship* and *Contemplation*, by *Love* and *Imitation*, by *Dependance* and *Subjection* that *God* is to be enjoyed by us; 'tis by *Charity* and *Righteousness*, by *Modesty* and *Peaceableness*, by *Submission* and *Condescension* that *Saints* and *Angels* are to be enjoyed by us; 'tis by *Pru-dence* and *Moderation*, by *Fortitude*, *Tem-pe-rance*, and *Humility*, that we *our selves* are to be enjoyed by us; And therefore if when we go into *Eternity*, we carry with us a *Mind* and *Will* *habituated* to these *beatifick Actions*, these *Acts* are the *Sum* and *Sub-stance* of *God's Will* and *Law*. Whilst therefore we take *Part* with *our own Will* against *God's*, we act quite counter to *our own Happiness*, and go contrary to all the

Acts

Acts of our *heavenly* Fruition and Enjoyment. For that which God designs in all his Commands, is to *educate* and *train up* our Nature for *Heaven*, to *discipline* and *exercise* it in the *beatifical* Acts of the *heavenly* Life; that so when it is advanced from this *School of Probation*, to the *University of Happiness*, it may be *instructed* in the *Language*, and *naturalized* to the *Exercise* of it; that it may be *predisposed* and *habituated* to *Love* and *De-  
pendance*, to *Charity* and *Righteousness*, and all those *beatifical* Acts by which *Heaven* is en-  
joyed. So that while we follow *his* Will, we are learning to enjoy *Heaven*, and per-  
fecting our selves in the Acts of our *everlast-  
ing* Fruition; that so when we go from hence to take Possession of the *Goods above*, we may be perfectly vers'd in the Enjoyment of them, and have the Skill and Ability to make a happy Use of them for ever. Whereas on the contrary, while we follow *our own* cor-  
rupt Will and Inclinations, we do not only not learn these *blessed* Acts of Fruition, but we learn the quite contraries. Instead of learning to enjoy God by *Love* and *Adoration*, we learn how to divide our selves *eternally* from him, by contracting Enmity to him, and a *profane* Contempt of his Majesty. In-  
stead of learning to enjoy *Saints* and *Angels* by *Charity* and *Righteousness*, we learn how to banish our selves from their *Society*, by

con-

contracting *malicious* and *disbonest* Inclinations; in a Word, instead of learning to enjoy *our selves* by *Humility* and *Temperance*, we learn how to be our own *Devils* and *Tormentors*, by contracting *Pride* and an *unlimited* Propension to *bodily Pleasures*; by which means we shall at last render our Nature not only *impotent*, but also *ireconcilable* to all those *blessed* Acts of our *future Happiness*, and so utterly disable our selves from enjoying *Heaven*, that it would be a *real Grievance* to us to be forc'd to endure it. For when by *thus* following *my own wicked Will*, I have contracted a *deep* and *inveterate* Aversion to all those *beatifical* Acts by which *Heaven* is enjoyed, I have an *Antipathy* against *Heaven* in my Nature, and so long as *this* continues, *Heaven* must be a *Torment* to me instead of a *Fruition*; and if when I go from *hence* into *Eternity*, I should be admitted into *Heaven*, with this *prevailing* Aversion to the *beatifical* Acts of it; I should be so far from enjoying it, that I should loath it, and rather choose to *banish* my self from it *for ever*; than to be confined to a Condition so *unsuitable* to my Nature. Whilst therefore I am running from *God* after *my own Will*, I am running from *Heaven*, and if I do not stop the sonner, shall run my self to a Distance from it, as *immense* and *irre-*

irreconcileable as that which separated Dives from Abraham's Bosom.

And thus you see how indispensably necessary upon all these Accounts *Self-denial* is, in order to our future Happiness. Hence then, let us all be persuaded to renounce our *Corporeal Will* and Affections, and resign up our selves to the Government of God: And further to move you hereunto, I beseech you briefly to consider with me these Four Things.

1. That in its self, *this* is the most *just* and *equitable* Thing you can do.
2. That in *this* consists the *Life* and *Substance* of all your Religion.
3. That *this* is the great *Hinge* upon which your *Safety* and *Security* depends.
4. That in *this* you do the most *effectually* consult *your own Interest*.

That to deny *your own Wills*, and resign up *your selves* to the Government of *God*, is in it self the most *just* and *equitable* Thing you can do. For all *your Powers* and *Faculties* are *Gods* by an *unalienable Right* and *Property*; *your Understanding* is *his*, and *your Will* is *his*, and all *your Powers* of *Action* are the *Births* and *Products* of his *fruitful Will*, and *Almighty Goodness*. And if it be thus, we must necessarily be obliged to subject *our selves* to him, and prostrate *our Wills*.

Wills, and all our Powers of Action at *his* feet. If then we are *his*, as we must be if we are made by him, what have we to do to dispose of *our selves* contrary to his Will and Pleasure? with what Colour of *Justice* can I *choose* what He commands me to *refuse*, when my Power of choosing is *his*, and he hath a far more *undoubted* Right to it than I have to the Cloaths on my Back? when he is the *supream Proprietor* of *that* Will wherewith I choose, with what Conscience can I vote with it against him, or give away *any* of my Choices and Elections from him? What is this but to *embezzle* my Masters Goods, and *alienate* his *Property* from his Use and Service? Remember, O *Man*! in every wicked Choice that thou makest, thou givest away thy self from thy *right Owner*, and dost *sacrilegiously* rob God of the Fruits of his own Creation, and must one Day expect to render a *dreadful* Account to him for every Choice thou hast given away from him, and for every *Thought*, and *Word*, and *Action* which thou hast presumed to dispose of contrary to his Orders: For thou hast *no more* Right to give away *thy self*, or *any* of thy *Choices* and *Actions* from God, and canst *no more* *justify* thy self for so doing, than thou hast to sell away thy *Landlords* *Fee-simple*, or to entail *his* *Inheritance* on the *Children*. And before you make *too bold* with

with God's Property, or presume to dispose of his Goods at your Pleasure, you were best consider seriously whom you have to deal with; that you have not to do with a *Being* that is to be *bitter'd out* of his Rights, or born down with Might and Violence; but with a God that is sufficiently sensible of your *unjust Usurpations*, and abundantly able to tevenge them; that is *jealous* of his own Rights and Properties, has a *deep* Resentment of all your *injurious* Invasions of them, and an *Almighty Arm* to assert and vindicate them. And when you have considered this, then alienate your *Choices* from him if you *dare*; but in the mean Time, as you will answer the *Injustice* of it at the *Tribunal of God*, have a *Care* how you dispose of *your selves* contrary to his Orders, lest as a *just* *Retribution* he should one Day dispose of you contrary to your *Wills* to *everlasting Misery* and *Despair*.

2. Consider that in this denying and resigning *our selves* to God, consists the Life and Substance of *all* our Religion. For what is Religion, but a *Religation*, a *Tying* or *Binding* fast Mens Minds and Wills to God? It is the Bond of our *Allegiance* to the *Throne of Heaven*, by which we oblige *our selves* to be God's *Subjects*, and do resign up our Wills, and all our Powers of Action to his Government; and in this, as I shew'd you,

consists Self-denial. For when once we have master'd our own Self-Will, and conquer'd its Obsturacy, and persuaded it to yield up it self to the Will of God, then is his glorious Empire set up in our Souls; then he is crowned our Sovereign Lord, his Kingdom is come into us, and we may cry *Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.* But till once our Religion hath tied our Souls to God, and obliged our Will to rendunce all other Lords, and submit to his Empire, it is only a Name, an empty Show and Formality of Religion; 'tis a Religion without a Religion; or a Bond without a Tye; that is, 'tis down right Nonsense, and a Contradiction to it self. And what Shows or Professions ~~soever~~ we may make of Religion, how zealous or forward soever we may be in the external Acts of it, it will all signifie nothing to us, unless there be a prostrate Will, and a resigned Heart at the bottom. For this is the *Alpha and Omega*, the Corner and the Top-Stone of Religion, and to pretend Religion without this, is to pretend *Loyalty in open Acts of Rebellion*. And indeed could Religion consist with a *rebellious Will*, the *Devil* himself might very fairly pretend to it; for that which makes him a *Devil*, is nothing but his own boisterous Self-Will that is continually struggling, and lifting up it self against God. And hence

*Belial*

*Belial* is the Devil's Name, which signifies without Yoak; and accordingly, the Children of *Belial* are described to be such, as do altogether break the Yoak, and burst the Bonds of the Lord, Jer. 5. 5. and called Children of Disobedience, Eph. 2. 2. because like their Father *Belial* they are impatient of Restraint, and will hearken to no Law but that of their own boundless Self-will. So far are those Men from being truly Religious, whose Wills are divided from God's, that they are in *Belial's Predicament*, unyoak'd from the Divine Government, and their Wills are in a strict Confederacy with the Devil. And hence the Prophet *Samuel* speaking of *Saul's* Rebellion against God, tells him, that *Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft*, 1 Sam. 15. 23. that is, Rebellion against God, is an implicite Confederacy with the Devil, even as *Witchcraft* is an implicite one. For the Devil being the Prince and Ring-leader of the Rebel-Creation, whoever sets up his Will against God, doesthereby renounce his Allegiance to Heaven, and like a false Recreant joyns hands with the Devil in Rebellion against his Maker. And whilst a Man's Soul doth thus clasp Wills with the Devil, and conspires with him in his Rebellion against Heaven; what impudent Hypocrisie is it for him to pretend to Religion? Wherefore, either let us be so modest for the future

as not to pretend to Religion, or any of those blessed Hopes it sets before us; or let us resolve to be so honest to our Pretensions as to deny our selves, and resign up our Wills to God. For while our Will and God's are divided and separated, and do in any Instance tread *Antipodes to each other*, all our Pretence of Religion is a *shameless Cheat*, which when it comes to be examined at the *Tribunal of God*, will be found a *meer Paint*, and *artificial* *Complection* *dawb'd* upon a *black* and *de-vilish* *Nature*.

3. Consider that upon our denying *our selves* and resigning our Wills to God, depends all *our Safety and Security*. For if God be against us, all the Powers of *Heaven* and *Earth* can't secure us; because *his Will* hath an *infinite Power* conjoyned with it, that like an *irresistible Torrent* bears down *all Oppositions*, and sweeps every Thing before it that stands in its way. To what purpose then should such *impotent Things* as we, set up *our Wills* against *his*? Can you ever hope to prevail against *him*, or to force his *Almighty Will* into a *Compliance with yours*? Gird up your selves like Men, and I will *demand* of you in the *Name of God*; have you an *Arm like God*, or can you *thunder* with a *Voice like him*? are ye able to withstand the *Whirlwind of his Power*, or to shelter your Heads against the *Storms of his*

Ven-

Vengeance? alas! no; a *Feather* in the Air may sooner stop a *Thunder-bolt* that comes roaring down from the Clouds, than you can the Course of that *Almighty Will* which doth whatever it pleases both in *Heaven* and *Earth*: And if so, with what safety can you oppose your *impotent Will* to it, or *how* can you expect to prosper in such an *unequal Contention*? Since therefore *God* doth so infinitely *out-match* you, and 'tis infallibly certain, that *first* or *last* he will be *too hard* for you; all that is left to your *Choice* is, whether you will *do* his *Will* or *suffer* it; whether you will *obey* his *Commands*, or *endure* his *Inflictions*: for one of these *you must do*, but which of the *Two*, is left to *your own Election*. If you think it more *eligible* to obey what *God* hath *enjoyed*, than to endure what he will *inflict*, you may by choosing the *former*, eternally secure your selves from the *latter*; For, besides, that such is the *generous Goodness* of *God's Nature*, as it will not permit him to trample upon the *Prostrate*, nor to deny *fair Quarter* to such as lay down their *Arms*, and freely surrender themselves to *his Will* and *Disposal*, besides this, I say, upon the *Satisfaction* which *his own Son* hath made for the *Sins* of the *World*, he hath obliged himself by a *publick Grant* and *Promise* of *Mercy* to receive us into his *Favour* and *Protection* upon our-

*unassigned* Submission to him, and to treat us graciously notwithstanding all our *past* Rebellions, as if we had been for ever perfectly *loyal* to him, and had neither in *Thought*, nor *Word*, nor *Deed* offended him. So that if now if we will heartily submit our Wills to him, he cannot let loose his Power on us without forfeiting *his* Truth, and doing Violence to the Perfections of *his own* Nature. But notwithstanding all the *Goodness* of his own Nature, and all the *Virtue* of that *Propitiation* that he hath made for our *Sins*, this is a Law which he will never dispense with; *I will see that my Creatures shall obey me, or feel me, that they shall conform to my Will, or sink under my Vengeance*; and if they will be so desperate as to refuse the former, all the Powers of Heaven and Earth shall not secure them from the latter. If therefore you are so abandoned of all Reason, as to think it *more* eligible to suffer the Will of *God* than to obey it, you must e'en take what follows; for as sure as *God* is in *Heaven*, and you upon *Earth*, you shall one Day feel the Weight of his Arm, if you do not freely *surrender* your selves to *his* Will and Disposal. But before you do so, for your *Souls* sake consider once more what a *terrible* Election you are making, that 'tis the *unquenchable* Wrath of the *ever-living* *God* that you are throwing your selves upon, a Wrath that will *imprint* it self upon every

every Faculty of your Nature, and be dropping like burning Sulphur upon your Souls for ever. And if after you have considered this, you will still adhere to your desperate Option, *the Lord have mercy upon your Souls.*

4. And lastly, Consider, that if there were no Obligation to this Duty, or no Danger in the contrary, yet in thus denying our selves, and resigning our Wills to God, we do the most effectually consult our own Interest. For God, being infinitely happy in *his own* Perfections, and deriving all *possible* Satisfaction from *his own* Self-Sufficiency, cannot be supposed to desire *any* Thing for himself *without* himself; and being perfectly exempted from *all* Want and Indigence by the infinite Fulness of his Being, he can have *nothing* of Envy or Malice in his Nature, which are *weak* and *impotent* Passions that do *always* spring out of a sense of Need and Insufficiency, and are *utterly* inconsistent with a State of *perfect* Fulness and Beatitude. Since therefore in his *outward* Administrations he can have no *Self-Ends* to serve upon his Creatures, and since he can have no Principle of *Envy* or *Malice* towards them in his Nature, it hence necessarily follows that in ruling and governing them he can have no *other* Design upon them but to do them *good*, and make them like *himself*, *i. e.* perfectly good and perfectly happy. So that

God's

God's End and ours is always the same; *we* would be happy and God would have us so too, and we our selves cannot aim at our Happiness more *heartily* and *sincerely* than he does; all the Difference therefore between *him* and *us* is about the *Means* and *Way* to our Happiness: We are for *one Way*, and he is for *another*; we think the Way to our Happiness is *to live in all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts*, and he thinks the Way to it is *to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*. So that the whole Dispute between God and *us*, so far as Reason is concerned in it, depends upon *this*, whether God be in the right, or *our selves*; whether *we* are not deceived in chusing *this Way*, or God be not deceived in prescribing the *contrary*. If we have any Reason to think that *we* are *wiser* than God, or do *better* understand the Way to *our own Happiness*; then it must be acknowledged that in refusing God's Way and chusing *our own*, we do advisedly consult *our own Interest*; but this is *such a Supposal*, as, I believe, never entered into *any Man's sober Thoughts*. And if we have all the Reason in the world to conclude not only that God is *wiser* than *we*, but that whereas *we* are extremely *short-sighted* and *apt* to be imposed upon with *glistening Shews* and *Appearances*, he hath such a *full Comprehension* of all *Things* as that he cannot be

be deceived ; then we may be sure that when we forsake *our own* Way and follow God's we cannot be *misted*, but at every step must be tending directly to *our own* Happiness. For if God cannot be deceived, and we may, it is certain that whenever *our* Way to Happiness lies contrary to *his*, he is in the right and we are in the *wrong* ; and consequently that when we forsake *his* Way to follow *our own*, we go from Happiness to Misery. It is *likely* that we should know what belongs to *humane* Nature, and the *ordering* and *regulating* its Affections and Actions ? That we should understand the *just* Bounds and Measures where it is to be *restrained* and where to be *indulged* better than the God that formed and composed it. And if it be *not*, as doubtless it is not, were we not much better resign *our* Wills to *his* Government than to live at *our own* Disposal ? For he desires to govern us for no *other* Reason but because he knows he can govern us much better than *our selves*. He seesthat we are a sort of *blind* and *precipitant* Creatures, that must unavoidably stumble into *eternal* Ruine if we follow *our own* Wills ; and therefore he would fain retrieve us out of *our own* Hands, that so having the *sole* Disposal of us *himself*, he may conduct us safely to Happiness. And when *He* intends as kindly to *us* as we can to *our selves*, were we not better

better follow his Wisdom than our own Folly? He knows that our Self-love will in the Effect prove Self-hatred to us, if it be not moderated and directed by a better and a wiser Love; and therefore he would have it under the direction of *him*, which is the best and wiser Love in the World. He desires to have the Government of our Will upon no other Account but only that he might determine *all* its Choices to our Happiness, and requires our Hearts of us merely for this End, that he might fill them with Peace and Rest. He knows that our Perfection and Happiness lies in Compliance with our Duty, in Piety and Justice, Mercy and Humanity, and that out of the free and constant, sprightly and vivacious Exercise of these Virtues arises all our Heaven, both here and hereafter; and knowing this, that tender Love he bears us, that mighty Concern he hath for our Welfare makes him thus urgent and importunate with us in his Demands of our Duty; for he regards our Duty no farther than it tends to our Good, and values each Act of our Obedience by what it contributes to our Happiness. He affects not to burthen us with unnecessary Impositions; all that he requires of us is what our Interest requires, which is so dear and precious to him that he will dispense with nothing that is necessary to promote and secure it; and 'tis there-

therefore he will not dispense with us, because he *cannot*, without releasing us from our Obligation to be happy. Why then should we desire, O foolish Creatures that we are, to be released from the Yoke of his Government? Or how can we count it Liberty to be *loosed* from an infinite Goodness that is conducted by infinite Wisdom and Power? For whatsoever my *blind* Lusts and Passions may dictate, my Reason assures me that the greatest Priviledge that belongs to a Creature is to be under the Government of God, and that if he should release me from my Subjection to his Will, by a Dispensation under the Broad-Seal of Heaven, and give me an *unlimited* Licence to live as I list, promising *never* to be displeased with me more, or to take any *farther* Cognizance of my Actions; the *best* and *wisest* Thing I could do for my self would be to *resign* back my self to his Goverment, and surrender up my *blind* and *precipitant* Will to his most *wise* and *gracious* Disposal! And if he should refuse to re-admit me to his Goverment, and abandon me *for ever* to my own *Self-Will*, I should be the most *forlorn* Soul on this side *Hell*; I should not know what to do, nor which Way to turn my self; but be forced to wander in a *dark* Wilderness without being ever able to discover any certain *Path-way* to my Happiness. But

so long as I am under the Government of God, I am sure I am safe; and while I follow his All-wise and most gracious Will, I know that I am going to a happy End; and that how rough soever my Way is, it will bring me to Chinan. What then remains but that from henceforth we utterly deny our selves, renounce our corrupt Wills and Inclinations, and cheerfully resign our selves to the Will of God; which hath no other Design upon us but to do us Good, to raise and advance our degenerate Natures, and conduct us through the Kingdom of Grace into the Kingdom of Glory.

**I JOHN**

and say, 1 JOHN III. 7. *Believe*  
**Little Children, let no man deceive you:**  
**He that doth righteousness, is righteous,**  
**even as he is righteous.**

**T**HESE WORDS are a short and plain Resolution of that Grand Case, *viz.* how a Man may know whether he be in a state of Grace and Favour with God; or, which is all one, whether he be a good Man and a good Christian. The Gnosticks, against whom St. John particularly directs this Epistle, placed all Righteousness and Goodness in certain pretended Illuminations, which had nothing in them but certain swelling Words of Vanity, and like gilded Bubbles were blown up with Wind, and filled with mystical Nonsense. And tho' in their Lives and Manners they were a Reproach and Scandal not only to Religion, but even to humane Nature; yet meerly upon the account of these their own Wild Dreams, they vaunted themselves to be the only Elect, and Favourites of God, and imagined themselves advanced to that degree of Perfection, as that they were above all Law, and freely dispensed with under the Broad-Seal of Heaven to live as they list, and

and to wallow in Riot and *Voluptuousness*. Against these *wild Men* the *Apostle* here seems to forewarn *his little Children*; suffer not these *vile Deceivers* to impose upon your *Faith* this their *damnable Error*, *viz.* that by receiving their *high-flown Mysteries* and *pretended Revelations*, you shall without any more ado be constituted *perfect and righteous Men* in the sight of *God*; for from *God him self* I do assure you that *he*, and *he only*, *that doth Righteousness*, is *righteous even as he is righteous*; *as well as Christ is righteous*, of whom I just before discoursed. In the Prosecution of which Argument I shall endeavour these two Things; *First*, to shew you, what it is to *do Righteousness in general*; *Secondly*, what that *righteous Doing* is which in the sense of *Christianity* constitutes us *Righteous Men*. *What it is to do Righteousness in general*. Answer, it is to give to every one his *Due*, or to perform to *God*, *ourselves*, and to all the *World* whatsoeuer is owing from the *State of our Nature*, and the *Relations and Circumstances* wherein we are placed. And in this Latitude to do *Righteousness* is the sum of *Religion*, and the *Whole Duty of Man*. The *righteous Man* therefore, or the *Man that doth Righteousness* is, in the sense of the Text, one, that *demeans himself so as in the Judgment of Right Reason he ought*

to do towards God, himself, and all the World; that looking upon himself under the *Relation* of God's Creature and Pensioner, doth freely render him all that *Homage*, and *Reverence*, and *Love*, and *Gratitude*, and *Trust*, and *Adoration* that are owing to so great a Creator, and so *liberal* a Benefactor; One that considering the *Frame* of his *own* Nature, how he is compounded of *contrary* Principles, *viz.* *Spirit* and *Flesh*, *Reason* and *Sense*; exercises himself in all those, *humane* Virtues, which consist in the Dominion of his *superior* Principles of *Reason* over his *sensitive* Passions and Appetites; such as *Patience* and *Equanimity*, *Courage* and *Meekness*, *Temperance* and *Chastity*; all which are proper to us as Beings made up of *contrary* Principles, from whence spring those *contrary* Appetites and *Inclinations* in us; in the *good* or *bad* Government whereof, the *Essence* of *humane Virtue* and *Vice* consists. In a Word, the *righteous* Man is one, who, considering his *State*, and *Circumstances*, and *Relations* in the World, behaves himself in them all as *right Reason* directs and obliges him; that as he is a *Member* of *humane Society*, bears an hearty *Good-Will* to the *whole Corporation* of Mankind; that is *courteous* and *affable*, *peaceable* and *condescending*, *long-suffering* and *ready* to *forgive*; that is *grateful* to those from whom he hath *recived Good*, and so

far as he hath Opportunity, is ready to do *Good to others*; that is *faithful to his Promises*, sincere in his *Professions*, just and *honest in his Dealings*; that heartily wishes every *Man* were good, and without *manifest Reason* to the contrary, believes every one to be so; that when he sees a *Fault* is ready to *excuse it*, and where he cannot, silently *bewails and laments it*; that as a *Subject* is *loyal and obedient to his Superiors*, and as a *Superior* is *careful of the Publick Good*, and *just and benign towards all his Inferiours*; that as a *Father* loves his *Children*, piously and wisely *educates them*, and is *provident for their Happiness both here and hereafter*; that as a *Child* reverences his *Parents*, and is ready to *comfort and assist them in their Needs*, and in all lawful Things to render them a *cheerful Obedience*; that as a *Husband* is *kind to his Wife*, *compassionate to her Infirmitie*s, and *easie to be intreated by her*; that as a *Wife* is *modest in her Behaviour*, *careful and vigilant in her Family*, and *soft and tractable to the Will of her Husband*; that as a *Master* is *just and benevolent to his Servants*, and *studious of their Welfare both temporal and eternal*; that as a *Servant* is *industrious in his Business*, and *faithful to his Trust*, and *obedient to his Master*; that in *Adversity* is *resigned and contented*, *honestly industrious to live*, and *grateful to those that relieve him*

him; that in *Prosperity* is *humble* and *modest*, and full of *good Works*; and to name no more, He is a *cordial Friend*, a *good Neighbour*, a *faithful Correspondent*, and a *zealous Lover* of his *Country*: These are the *main Ingredients* that compound a *righteous Man*; and accordingly we find that wherever he is mentioned in *Scripture*, he is always described by such like *Characters* as these: thus in the 15th *Psalm*, where the *Psalmist* sets himself on purpose to describe the *righteous Man* that should dwell in the *Tabernacle of God*, he is represented as one that *walketh uprightly*, and *worketh Righteousness*; that *speaketh Truth*, and is *tender* of his *Neighbour's Reputation*; that freely lends to those that are in *Need*, and will not be bribed against the *Innocent*. So also *Ezek. 18. 14, 15, 16, 17.* he is described to be one that is no *Idolater*, no *Adulterer*, no *Oppressor*; that doth not *defraud* his *Neighbour* of his *Right*, but is *just* and *Liberal* to the *Poor*, and freely lends to those that are in *need*. And *Micah 6. 7.* the *Prophet* tells us what it is that renders us *just* and *acceptable* in the sight of *God*, viz. *doing Justice*, *loving Mercy*, and *walking Humbly with God*. So also in the *New Testament* we are taught, that *pure* and *undefiled Religion* consists in *visiting the Fatherless* and *Widows in their affliction*, and *keeping our selves unspotted from*

*the World.* James 1. 27. and Gal. 5. 22. St. Paul tells us that the *fruits of the Spirit* which render us *righteous* in the sight of God, are such as these, *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance*; and to name no more, the same Apostle Tit. 2. 11. faith, that the *Righteousness* which the *Gospel*, or *Grace of God* designs to propagate in the *World*, is this, *that denying ungodliness and worldly-lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present World*; which Three, are the *Sum of all those Virtues* which constitute a *Righteous Man.*

Having thus shewed what it is in general to do *Righteousness*, I now proceed in the *second Place* to shew what that *Righteous Doing* is, which in the *Sense of Christianity* doth constitute us *Righteous Men*: In order to which it will be necessary to premise these *Three Things.*

1. That *Christianity* supposes many *Imperfections* and *Infirmities* in those whom it yet allows to be *Righteous Men*; and indeed if it did not, it could admit no *Man* in the *World* to be *righteous*. For it bath seemed good to the *Divine Wisdom* to introduce us into the *World* in an *imperfect State*, that so by the *good Use* of our own *free Wills* and *rational Faculties*, assisted by his *Grace*, we might by *Degrees* advance to a more *sublime* and

and perfect Condition, till through our gradual Progress from this rude and imperfect State, we at length arrive to the Perfection of Happiness for which we were made: And such is the Condition of our Nature, as that it is as necessary for us to begin imperfectly, as to be born Infants; nor can a *Babe in Christ* any more have the Perfections of a *grown and experienced Christian*, than can an *Infant* of a Span long have the Strength and Wisdom of a Man. In this State of Things therefore, if God will not allow the *lowest* Degree of our Perfection to be *good*, neither can he the *highest*; for our Improvement being gradual, there must of necessity be a *first* Degree, before there can be a *second*; and therefore if God allows not the *first*, he must for the same Reason disallow the *second* of the *same* kind, and so on from the *third* to the *highest* Degree of all. Seeing therefore *Christianity* is a *Religion* for Men, it must be supposed to be fitted to their *low* and *imperfect* Condition, which it could not be if it did not *abate* for our Defects, and admit us to be *righteous* in the *main*, even while we are imperfectly so; and that it doth so, is apparent by the distinction it frequently makes between the *less* and the *more* Perfect, still allowing both to be Righteous. Thus it distinguishes between *Babes* and *Men*, allowing *both* to be in *Christ*; between

the *Weak*, and the *Strong*, and *Confirmeſs*,  
allowing both to be in the *Faith*: And our  
Saviour himſelf ſpeaking of ſome, who upon  
receiving the *Seed of the Gospel*, brought  
forth *Thirty*, of others who brought forth  
*Sixty*, and others a *Hundred-fold*, doth yet  
allow them all to be *good Ground*. Matth. 13:  
and Luke 19. 14. He as well allows him to  
be a *good and faithful Servant* who had im-  
proved his *Talent into Five*, as he who had  
improved his *into Ten*. From all which it is  
evident, that the *Gospel* doth not judge of  
our *main State* by the *Degrees*, but by the  
Reality of our *Righteousness*.

2. It is to be premised, that that which  
conſtitutes us *Righteous Men* in the *Judgment*  
of the *Gospel*, is ſome *internal vital Principle*  
of *Righteousness*. For as all other Things  
receive their *Denomination* from their  
*Forms*, ſo it is from ſome *internal Form* of  
*Righteousness* that *righteous Men* receive  
their *Denomination*. It is not the *simple*  
doing *righteous Actions* that conſtitutes a  
Man *righteous*; for he may be a very *bad*  
Man, not only while he doth that which  
is *Righteous*, but also in the *very doing* of  
it. Thus a *Man* may *fast* and *pray*, only  
to *gloss* his *Oppreſſions*; he may do an *ho-*  
*nest Action*, to *disguife* a *knaviſh Design*, in  
which *Case* he *sins* in the *doing* of it, be-  
cause in the *doing* it, he *prophanes Religion*  
by

by making it a *Cloak* for his Wickedness ; a plain Evidence, that Actions which in themselves are materially *good*, do partake of the *Principles* from whence they do proceed, and receive their *Form* and *Denomination* from them ; seeing even *good* Actions may be infected by a *bad* Principle, and derive into themselves the *Malignity* and *Baseness* of the Fountains from whence they flow. And if without a *righteous* Principle our Actions cannot be *righteous*, to be sure neither can we ; because we are as our Actions are. Hence you may observe in the *New Testament*, that *good* Men are generally denominated from some *internal* Form of *Goodness* ; they are said to be *born of God*, and to have the *seed of God remaining in them*. 1. Joh. 3. 9. and to be *renewed in the Spirit of their Mind*, Eph. 4. 23. to be *spiritually minded*, Rom. 8. 6. and to be *transformed by the renewing of their Mind*, Rom. 12. 2. and to be *partakers of the Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. all which, do plainly denote, that to constitute us *righteous Men* in the Sense of the *Gospel*, there is necessarily required some *internal* Form and Principle of *Righteousness*.

3. And lastly, We must premise, that *Christianity* being the Law or Rule of our *Religion*, the *internal* Principle, which in the Sense of this Law constitutes us *Righteous*, must be strictly Religious ; that is, it must

be such as doth immediately respect God, who is the great Object of all *Religion*. For *Religion* in the strictest Sense, is the Rule of *Divine Worship*, and under this Notion of *Divine Worship*, or Homage, and Obedience to God, Christianity exacts every Duty of us; for it requires us to do all as unto God, and to do all to the Glory of God; i.e. in Obedience to him, and out of a sincere Acknowledgment of his *Authority* over us, and immutable Right to rule and command us: And even those *moral Virtues* which do immediately respect our Neighbours and our selves, are enjoyed as Duties unto God, and bound upon us with *religious Obligations*. So that now all the *Acts* and *Functions* of a good Life are adopted into the Rubrick of *Christian Worship*, and required of us as *Acts* of Obedience to God; from whence it follows, that the Spring and Principle of those *Acts* must be strictly Religious, immediately respecting God and his *Authority* over us; it being impossible those *Acts* should be truly *religious*, which do not proceed from a *religious Principle*.

These Things being premised, I come now to lay down what that Principle is, which in the Sense of *Christian Religion* constitutes us *righteous Men*. In general, it is a considerate, universal prevailing Resolution to obey God, proceeding from our Belief of

the

the *Christian Religion*: For the better understanding of which, I shall briefly explain the particular Terms of it.

1. I say it is a *Resolution*.
2. It is a *Resolution of obeying God*.
3. It is a *Considerate Resolution*.
4. An *universal*, and
5. A *prevalent* one.
6. A *Resolution of obeying God*, springing out of our Belief of the *Christian Religion*.

1. It is a *Resolution*; by which I exclude the *Habit* of *Obedience* from being the prime and constitutive Principle of *Christian Righteousness*. For *Christianity*, as was shewn before, supposing great Imperfections and Infirmitates even in those whom it allows to be *righteous* in the main; if we would judge rightly of our own State by the *Christian Rule*, we must take measure of our *selves* from that which is the *lowest* and most *imperfect* Principle of *Righteousness*, and not conclude our selves to be *unrighteous*, because we are not *righteous* to such a Degree; but as for the habit of *Obedience* which consists in an *inherent* *Promptness*, *Faculty* and *Easiness* to obey, it is so *perfect* a Principle, as is not attainable but under a *long Progress* in *Religion*. For when after a *vicious Course* of *Life* we begin to reform, we are so far from being *habituated* to obey

obey God, that we obey him with Difficulty, and strong Reluctancy, and are fain to row against the Stream of *our own* Inclination; in which state we are far from having attained to an *Habit* or Promptness of obeying. So that by making *this* the *constitutive Principle* of *Christian Righteousness*, we exclude from the State of Righteousness all *Beginners in Religion*, and do allow none to be *faithful Servants*, but those who have conquer'd the difficulties of obeying. The true Form or Principle therefore, from which we receive the Denomination of *righteous Men* is that Point or Term, from which we begin to be righteous, and that is a *righteous Resolution*. For *Choice* and *Resolution* is the Spring of all *voluntary Actions*, and consequently from thence we begin to act *righteously*, and in the pursuit of *that*, we grow and improve into an *habit* of Righteousness. Our *first step*, is to resolve well; our *next*, to do well; the *uninterrupted Repetition* of which, will at length improve into an *habit* of well-doing. *I will arise*, says the *Prodigal*, and go to my Father; that was the *first step* of his Return, and the *vital Principle* whence all his *After-Motions* did proceed.

2. It is a Resolution to obey God; by which I exclude those *good Resolutions* from being the *Christian Principle* of Righteousness

ness which have no respect at all to God, but either to the gratifying our *natural Temper* only, or to the securing our *Health*, or *Reputation*, or *secular Interest*; which, tho' they may be productive of very good *Morals* in our *Conversation*, are far from being the *inward Form and Principle of Righteousness* which *Christianity* requires; for that, as was before premised, must be strictly *religious*, and consequently, must be a *Resolution* to obey *God*. For that we should obey *God*, is the *fundamental Law of Religion*, whence all its *particular Laws* derive their Force and Obligation; and therefore to resolve to obey *God* must be the *fundamental Principle of Religion* from whence all the particular *Acts* of it proceed. So that the *internal Principle* which constitutes us *religiously good*, must answer to that *external Principle* which obliges us to be so; and it is only our *Resolution* to obey *God*, which answers to that *external Principle* that makes it our *Duty* to obey him. In this *Resolution*, and in this only, consists the *Submission* of our *Wills* to *God*, the *Homage* and *Fealty* of our *Souls*; without which, all *external shews* of *Piety* and *Virtue*, are but a *dead Formality*. Not that an *actual explicite Resolution* of obeying *God* is necessary to every *good Action*, for this is impossible; our *Occasions* of doing *good* being to *infinite*, and so often occurring

curing in our *secular* Affairs, and our Minds so incapable of attending many Things at once, that it is not in our Power to form an *actual* Resolution of Obedience, as often as we are called upon to do *good* Actions. It is sufficient therefore, that in general we have *such* a Resolution fixt in our Minds; and this, tho' we do not exert it in every *particular* Action, will constitute every Action *good*, and render it acceptable to God.

3. It must be a *considerate*, *well-weighed* Resolution; by which I exclude from being the Principle of *Christian* Righteousness, all those *rash* and *unsettled* Purposes Men make in Heats of *Passion*. For there can never be any *holding good* Resolution, but what is founded upon *Reason* and *Judgment*; for *Reason* is the same Thing in all Circumstances; it is a *stiff* and *inflexible* Thing, that will not *ply* and *bend* to the *Alterations* of our Humours and Interests; whereas *Passion* is a *fickle* and *inconstant* Thing that is generally governed by *outward Accidents*, and is as *various* and *mutable* as they. He therefore that founds his *good* Resolutions upon Heats of *Passion*, sets his Soul upon a *Weather-cock*, which every *contrary* Blast of Humour or Interest, blows into a *contrary* Position. Till such time therefore as a Man hath a *new* *Judgment* of Things, it will be in vain for him to make any *new* Resolutions;

ons; because it is *morally* impossible, that *any* Resolution should be lasting, that is not founded upon *Reason* and *Judgment*. But when a Man hath steared the *past* Course of his Life by an *old, inveterate, false* Judgment of Things, it will require a great deal of *serious* Consideration to form and settle a new one; and if before this is done, men enter upon *new* Resolutions, they must resolve without considering either the *Matters* they resolve on, or the *Motives* which should support their Resolution; insomuch that when they come to practise what they *thus* hastily resolved, either they find more Difficulty in the *Matter* than they were aware of, or want *sufficient* Motives to carry them through it; by reason of which their Resolution *flaggs* in the Execution, and many times yields to the *next* Temptation that encounters them. To the forming therefore of a *holding* Resolution, such as will prove a *living* Principle of Righteousness, great Care must be taken to found it on a *through* Consideration both of the Particulars we resolve upon, together with their *appendent* Difficulties; and of the Motives and Arguments with which *Christianity* backs and inforces it. First we must set before our Eyes the *Sins* we must part with, and the *Duties* we must submit to, and fairly represent to our selves the *many* Difficulties

ties and Temptations that are like to attend us in both; and having thus placed ourselves in the *midst* of the Difficulties of a *religious Life*, and so far as in us lies, rendered them *actual* and *present* to us, we must never cease pressing our *stubborn Wills* with the Arguments and Motives of *Religion*, till we have obtained of them an *explicit Consent* to every Duty that calls for our *Resolution*. And when we have *thus* weighed all Particulars over and over in the *Ballance* of an *impartial Consideration*, and implored the *Divine Assistance*, (without which our *strongest Resolution* will certainly fail, and which is never wanting to any but those who are wanting to themselves) let us then resolve, and seal our *Resolution* with *solemn Vows* and *Promises* to *God*: For thus our *blessed Saviour*, when he saw the *Multitude* forward to follow him, fairly proposes to their *Consideration* the *Difficulties* they must engage in, if they would be his *Disciples*; that so their resolving in *too much hast*, might not give them *Occasion* to *repent* at *leisure*, as you may see at large *Luke 14. 26---34.* And elsewere he compares *rash* and *inconsiderate Resolvers*, to a *Man* that goes about to build a *Tower*, without ever considering what it will cost, or whether he hath *Mony sufficient* to finish it; and so when he hath laid the *Foundation* gives it over,

over, and renders himself ridiculous; and the same he compares also to a King that goes to war without ever considering whether he hath Force enough to encounter his Enemy, and so rushing headlong into the Battle, is either forced to retreat, or yield to the Mercy of the Conqueror. And in the Parable of the Prodigal Luke 15. wherein he purposely describes the whole Progress of the Soul towards God; the first Thing the Prodigal did after he came to himself, was to consider what an happy Change he should make in his Condition by returning to his Father; *how many hired Servants of my Fathers have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!* and having well considered this, he at length resolves, *I will arise and go to my Father.* Thus also the Prophet David introduces his Resolution of Amendment, through a deep and serious Consideration of his ways, *I thought on my ways, and turned my Feet unto thy Testimonies.* Psal. 119. 59.

4. It must be an universal Resolution of obeying God, such as indifferently extends to all the Instances of our Duty, otherwise it can be no entire Principle of Righteousness; because tho' it may reform us in some Instances, it must leave us unreformed in others, and so can only render us less wicked, but never intirely good. For seeing the Christian

stian Law exacts of us universal Obedience, and doth not oblige us in one Instance, and dispence with us in another; it is impossible that any Resolution should be the Principle of that Righteousness it requires, but that which respects the whole. If we keep the whole Law, saith St. James, and yet offend in one point, we are guilty of all; for which he subjoyns this Reason, he that bath said, do not commit Adultery; said also, do not kill, James 2. 10, 11. i. e. it is the same Authority that forbids the one as well as the other; and therefore, tho' thou dost not the one, yet if thou dost the other, thou finnest against the Authority of both. Seeing therefore we are not accounted universally righteous by the Law of Christ, unless we do universally obey it, a partial Resolution to obey can never constitute us Righteous; because such a Resolution will never make us universally obedient. Then shall I not be ashamed, saith David, when I have respect unto all thy Commandments. Psal. 119. 6. So that to make our Resolution a Christian Principle of Righteousness, it is necessary that it should be universal, i. e. of equal extent with that Law which is the Measure of our Righteousness; that like a fruitful Womb it should be pregnant with every good Work, and virtually contain in it every Particular that our Religion hath made our Duty.

5. It must be a *prevailing* Resolution; a Resolution of such Force as doth engage us to do what we resolve, and actually prevails over all Temptations to the contrary. For all the Virtue of a good Resolution consists in its Relation to Action, because if that we resolve to do, be not *necessary*, it is *indifferent* whether we resolve to do it or no; but if it be, it must be done, otherwise we had been as good *never* to have resolved to do it. The *goodness* of our Resolution therefore consists in *this*, that it is an Engagement to practise what we resolve; and consequently if our Resolution to obey God, be not prevalent enough to engage us to obey him, it is so far from being a *true* Principle of *Christian Righteousness*; that it is a meer *insignificant Cypher*. For as *that* can be no *Cause* which produces no *Effect*; so that can be no Principle of Righteousness, which is not productive of it; and if to make it a Principle of Righteousness, it is necessary, that it should be a *prevalent* Engagement to a *righteous Life*, then it follows that when it ceases to be prevalent, it ceases to be a Principle of Righteousness; and consequently that whenever we do commit any *Sin* that is inconsistent with a *prevailing* Resolution to obey God, we do for that Time cease to be *righteous Men*. But there are no *Sins* inconsistent with a *prevailing Resolution*

solution to obey God, but such as do prevail against it, and actually *over-power* it; and therefore as for those *Weaknesses*, *Surrepitions*, and *Surprizes*, which, for Distinction-sake, we call *Sins of Infirmitie*; either we do not consent to them, and consequently they are so far from *over-powering* our *good Resolution*, that they do not at all *contest* with it; or if we do consent to them, it is unawares, before we can *oppose* our *Resolution* against them. So that tho' upon *Surprize* they do *win* our *Consent*, yet they do not *win* it from our *good Resolution*, which in this *sudden* *Hurry* of *Thoughts* had not time to *canvas* for it; but had *Power* enough to have obtained it, had it had but *Opportunity* to prefer its *Claim*; and therefore as for such *Sins* as these, they may fairly comport with a *prevailing Resolution* of *Obedience*. But then there are *Sins of Wilfulness* which proceed either from *wilful Habits*, or from *deliberate Choice*, and these are no *more* consistent with such a *Resolution*, than one *Contrary* is with another in the same *Degree*. For he who *sins wilfully* is prevalently resolved to *sin*; and to be so, and at the same time prevalently resolved to obey God is a *Contradiction in Terms*. Whilst therefore *Sin* hath the *Prevalence* in us, we are so long *Servants of Sin*, and do so long cease to be *Servants of Righteousness*. 'Tis true,

true, there are Degrees of *Wickedness*, and the longer a Man continues *wicked*, the worse he will be ; but still he is a *wicked* Man, who is *more* prevalently resolved to *sin* than to obey God ; and he who is so, tho' but for an *Hour* or a *Day*, is so long *wicked*, as well as he who continues so for a *Month* or a *Year* : He is not *wicked* indeed to so *high* a Degree, and so may far more easily recover ; but from the Time that we deliberately consent to any *known* Sin, to the Time that we repent of it, we are *wilful* Sinners. If we repent immediately, we immediately recover into that *good* Estate from whence we were fallen, and so our Wound is cured almost as soon as it is made. For the *proper* Repentance of *single* Acts of *wilful* Sin, is either to resolve not to repeat them, or, where it can be done, to undo them again by Restitution. But when our *baffled* Resolution to obey God is thus recover'd into a *prevalent* Engagement to obey him, it revives into a *living* Principle of Righteousness ; but yet before we can reasonably conclude it is such, we must make some *Tryal* of it ; for as it is certain, that until it be *Prevalent*, it is not a *true* Principle of Righteousness ; so it is certain, that till for some time it hath actually prevailed, we cannot be *secure* that it is *prevalent*. That is not to be called a *prevalent*

Resolution, that for a *Day* or a *Week* puts us into a *Fit of Religion*, and so expires; such *flashy Purposes* are so far from being *thorough Cures*, that they are only so many *Interruptions* of our *Disease*, that always leave us as *bad* or *worse* than they found us. But if upon *sufficient Tryal* we find that our Resolution doth hold against *all Temptations*, and actually engage us to our Duty in despite of *all Sollicitations* to the contrary, we may then safely conclude, that it is *that very vital Principle*, which in the Judgment of our *holy Religion*, doth constitute us *Righteous Men*. And accordingly *Math. 21. 28, 29, 30.* our *Saviour* compares those who might, but did not enter into the *Kingdom of Heaven*, to a *Son* that *first* resolved to go whither his Father commanded him, but *afterwards* cooled and did not obey; implying, that the *great Fault*, which spoiled his Resolution, and rendred it insignificant was this, that it was not *firm* and *prevalent*; which had it been, it had actually entered him in the *Kingdom of Heaven*.

6. And lastly, It must be a Resolution to obey God, springing out of our Belief of the *Christian Religion*; and this it is which renders it *strictly* and *properly*, a *Christian Principle* of *Righteousness*. 'Tis true indeed, if either we *never* heard of *Christianity*, or it had never been proposed to us, with *sufficient*

ficient Motives of *Credibility*, our Infidelity would have been only our Misery, but not our Crime; and if upon a *through* Consideration of the Arguments of *natural Religion*, and of the *Good* and *Evil* which naturally springs out of *good* and *evil* Actions, we were effectually resolved to study the Will of *God*, and, so far as we understood it, to obey it; it had been no *criminal* Defect in our Resolution not to be founded upon our Belief of *Christianity*; because to believe without *sufficient* Reason, is so far from being our Duty, that it is our Defect, and an Argument of our *Weakness*, and *foolish* *Credulity*. But now that *Christianity* hath been made known, and sufficiently proposed to us, we cannot be *good* Men, unless we do believe it, and if we do believe it, we cannot be *good* Christians if we do not thereupon effectually resolve to obey it. In short therefore, they who have not the *Gospel*, are obliged to obey *God* upon the Motives of *natural Religion*, which is all that can reasonably be expected from them; but as for *us* who have the *Gospel*, wherein, together with the Arguments of *Nature*, *God* hath fairly proposed to us the *higher* Motives of *Christianity*, we are bound to believe *these* as well as *those*; and upon this Belief to proceed to a *firm* Resolution of Obedience; which if we do, our Resolution is strictly *Christian*.

in Contra-distinction to theirs who have not the Gospel, and so resolve only upon Principles of *Natural Reason*; not but that their Resolution is for substance the same with ours, only ours is founded upon greater and more prevalent Motives. The Duties of *Christianity* are the same with those of *Natural Religion*, and excepting those three positive Precepts, of *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, and of worshipping God in and through *Christ*, there is no Command in the *Gospel* distinct from the *Eternal Rules of Morality* which the *Gospel* doth improve upon new Principles, and strengthen with more powerful Obligations.

And thus I have explained to you what is that *Vital Form* and Principle which, in the Sense of the Law of *Christ*, doth constitute us *Righteous Men*. In short; he is a *Righteous Man* in the true *Christian Sense*, who upon a *through* Consideration of the Arguments and Motives of *Christianity* is universally and prevalently resolved to obey its Laws. To conclude all therefore, from hence I infer,

1. What is the *true safe Way* for a Man to resolve his *own Conscience* concerning the *main State* of his *Soul*, whether in the *Gospel-sense* he be *Righteous*, or no. I know it is a common Doctrine with some Men, that the Resolution of this *great Case* depends

pends upon an *inward Whisper*, *Suggestion*, or *Testimony* of the *Spirit of God*, which I fear hath fatally deluded ~~soo~~ many Men into a *groundless Confidence* and *Assurance*. For when all of a sudden they feel themselves surprised with *joyous* and *comfortable* Thoughts, they presently conclude it to be an *inward Whisper* and *Testimony* of the *Spirit of God*, when many times there is nothing in it but an *unaccountable Frisque* of *melancholly Vapors* heated and fermented by a *feverish Humour*; and many of these *sudden Joys* and *Dejections*, which these Men interpret to be the *Incomes* and *With-drawings* of the *Spirit of God*, do apparently proceed from no other Cause than the *Shiverings* and *Burnings* of an *Ague*; upon which account *Hysterical Fits* are frequently mistaken for *spiritual Exercises*. And when Men have most confidently believed themselves *overshadowered* by the *Holy Ghost*, their Fancies have been only hagg'd and ridden by the *Enthusiaſtick Vapors* of their own *Spleen*. And some times I make no doubt, but this *sudden Flush* of *joyous* Thoughts proceeds from a *worse Principle*, even from the suggestion of the *Devil*; who, tho' he hath no *immediate Access* to the *Minds* of Men, can doubtless act upon their *Spirits* and *Humours*, and thereby figure their *Fancies* with sprightly *Ideas*,

and tickle their *Hearts* into a Rapture; and this Power of *his* we may reasonably suppose he is ready enough to exert upon any mischievous Occasion, whenever he finds a Man willing to be deceived, and to rely upon *ungrounded* Prelumptions. The *true* and only *safe* Way therefore for a Man to resolve himself is impartially to survey himself, and to consider whether in the *main* his Intentions and Actions are righteous. If you ask, by what *Signs* and *Tokens* shall a Man know this? I answer, there is nothing can be a *true* Sign of *Righteousness* but *Righteousness*, nothing but what is an *Act* or *Instance* of *Righteousness*. But then we must have a great Care, that we do not argue from *particular* *Acts* and *Instances* that weare *Righteous* in the *main*; For you may as well conclude that you are not *blind*, because you *hear* well, or that you are not *deaf*, because you *see* well, or that you have *all* your *Senses*, because you have *one* or *two*, as that you are *Righteous* in the *main*, because you are so in *this* or *that* *particular*. Well then, how shall we do to resolve our selves in this most *material* Enquiry? Why do but consider what it is to be *Righteous*, and then reflect upon *your own* Motion, and you will quickly feel whether you are *Righteous* or no; for to be *Righteous* is for the *main* to intend *righteously*, and act accordingly.

cordingly. If you ask again, how you shall know whether you *so* intend and act; I shall only answer, that it is an *unreasonable* Question, and that you might as well ask, whether you are *hungry* or *thirsty*; because you do as *naturally* feel the Motions of your *Soul*, as those of your *Body*; and for you to ask *another* Man what *your own* Intentions are, is to make him a *Conjurer* instead of a *Casuist*. Would it not look extremely ridiculous for a Man to ask his *Creditor* or *Customer*, Good Sir, how shall I know whether I intend to pay my Debts, or am sincerely resolved not to over-reach you? Should any Man ask me *such* a Question, I should only bid him consult himself, and if then he suspected his *own* Honesty, truly I should suspect that he had *too* much Reason for it. For if a Man intends righteously, to be sure he intends it *knowingly*; and if he knowingly intends it, he cannot but *know* he intends it; for if he cannot know that he doth it, it is because he cannot know how to do it; and if he cannot know *how* to do it, he is not a *capable* Subject of *Morality*, but must of necessity *live* and *act* at random, and blunder on, like a Traveller in the dark, without being able to distinguish whether he goes *right* or *wrong*. Wherefore as you would not be deceived in a Point of the *highest* Importance in the World, a Point upon

upon which your everlasting Fate depends, *viz.* whether you are *Righteous Men* or no; do not measure your selves by any other Rule, but *this* sure and infallible one in the Text, *He that doth Righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

2. From hence I infer, that seeing Righteousness is the *good State* of our Souls, that the *main Thing* upon which we ought to value our selves is upon our being truly *Righteous*. For if we have any such Thing as a *rational and immortal Soul* about us, it is doubtless by far the *noblest Ingredient* of our Beings; 'tis that by which we are near allied to *Angels*, and do even border upon *God* himself. He therefore who values himself by any thing but his *Soul*, and that which is its *Grace and Perfection*, begins at the *wrong End* of himself, forgets his *Jewels*, and estimates his *Estate* by his *Number*; in so much that one would think it impossible, did not *too many woful Experiments* daily evince the contrary, that any *Creature* owning and believing a *rational and immortal Spirit* to be a *Part* of its *Being*, should be so ridiculous as to value it self by such *little trifling Advantages* as a *well-coloured Skin*, a *Suit of fine Cloaths*, a *Puff of Popular Applause*, a *Bag of red or white Earth*; and yet, *God help us*, these are the *only Things* almost by which we *difference*

ference our selves from one another. You are a much better Man than your Neighbour, who is a very poor contemptible Wretch, a little creeping despicable Animal, not worthy to be taken notice of by such a one as you. Why in the name of God, Sir, what's the matter? Where is this mighty Difference between you and him? Hath he not a Soul as well as you, a Soul that is capable to live as long and be as happy as yours. Yes, that is true indeed; but notwithstanding that, you thank God for it, you are another guize Man than he; for you have a much handsomer Body, your Apparel is finer and more fashionable; you live in a more splendid Equipage, and have a larger Purse to maintain it; and to your great Comfort, your Name is more in Vogue and makes a far greater Rattle in the World. And is this all the Difference then between your mighty Self, and your poor Neighbour? Alas, a few Days more will put an end to all this; and when your rich Attires are reduced to a Winding-sheet, and all your vast Possessions to six Foot of Earth, what will become of all these little Trifles, by which you value your selves so highly? Where now will be the Beauty, the Wealth, the Port and Garb, of which you are so conceited? Alas, now that lovely Body will look as pale and gastral, that lofty Soul will be left as bare, as poor and

and *naked*, as your *despised* Neighbours ; and should you now meet his wandring *Ghost* in the *vast* World of *Spirits*, what will you have left to boast of more than he ; now that your *Beauty* is withered, your *Wealth* vanished, and all your *outward Pomp* and *Splendor* buried in a *silent Grave*? Now you will have nothing left to distinguish you from the most *Contemptible*, unless you have *wiser* and *better* Souls, which are the only *Preheminencies* above other Men that will survive our *Funerals*, and distinguish us from *base* and *abject* Souls for ever. If we are now more *pious*, and *humble*, and *just*, and *charitable* than other Men, this will stick by us when our Heads are laid, and to all *Eternity* render us *glorious* and *happy*. And indeed when once we have thrown off our Body and all our *hodily Passions* and *Necessities*, the only *Goods* we shall be capable of enjoying are *God*, *our selves*, and the *Society* of *blessed Spirits*, and these are no otherwise enjoyable but only by *Acts* of *Piety* and *Virtue*. It is only by our *Contemplation* and *Worship*, our *Love* and *Imitation* of *God* that we can enjoy him ; it is only by our *Prudence* and *Moderation*, our *Temperance* and *Humility* that we can enjoy *our selves* ; it is only by our *Charity* and *Justice*, our *Modesty*, *peaceable* and *mutual* *Submission* and *Condescension* to one another that we can

can enjoy the glorious Society of *blessed Spirits*, but if our *unbodied Spirits* carry with them these *divine Graces* into the *other World*, we shall by them be possessed of every Thing our utmost Wishes can propose; of a *good God*, a *god-like, joyous and contented Mind*, a *peaceful, kind, and righteous Neighbourhood*, and so all above, within, and without us will be a *pure and perfect Heaven*. So that if when I go from hence to seek my Fortune in the *World of Spirits*, God should thus bespeak me, *O man!* seeing thou art now leaving all the *Enjoyments of sense*, consult what will do thee good, and thou shalt have whatever thou wilt ask to carry with thee into the *spiritual State*: I say should God thus offer me, I am sure the utmost Good I could wisely crave, would be this, *Lord give me a Heart inflamed with Love, and winged with Duty to thee, that thereby I may but enjoy thee; give me a sober and a temperate Mind, that thereby I may enjoy my self; give me a kind and peaceable and righteous Temper, that thereby I may enjoy the sweet Society of blessed Spirits: O give me but these blessed Things, and thou hast crowned all my Wishes, and to Eternity I will never ask any other Favour for my self but only this, that I may continue a holy and a righteous Soul for ever; for so long as I continue so, I am sure I shall enjoy all spiritual Goods, and be as Happy as Heaven can*

can make me. What a prodigious Piece of Folly therefore is it for Men to value themselves more upon these outward Advantages, of wnic<sup>h</sup> e'er long they must be stript, than upon the *Graces* and *Virtues* of their own Minds, on which they must subsist for ever? Suppose now that you were a *Merchant* in a *far Country* where you were allowed for a short *uncertain* Time the Benefit of *free Trade* and *Commerce* in order to your gaining a *good Estate* to maintain you in your own *Native Country*, when ever you are forced to return; would you be so indiscreet as to lay out all the Product of your *Merchandize* in building *fine Houses*, and purchasing *great Farms*, when you know not how soon you may be commanded to depart and leave all the *immovable Goods* behind you? Or rather would you not think your selves obliged by all the Rules of *Interest* and *Discretion* to convert all your *Gain* into *portable Wealth*, into *Mony* or *Jewels* or other such *moveable Commodities*, as, when ever you are forced to depart, you might carry Home along with you, and there maintain your selves with them in many years *Ease* and *Plenty*? Do but think then, and think it often, that while you live *here* you are but *Strangers* and *Foreign Merchants*; that you came *hither* from *another*, *World*, to which you know

know not how soon you may be forced to return ; that all the Wealth, the Lands and Houses you gain by your *present* Commerce are *immovable Goods* which you must leave behind you when you go from *hence*, and that there is nothing portable of all that you can gain in this World but only the *Graces* and *Virtues* of your Minds, and that therefore while you have Opportunity it concerns you above all Things to store and treasure up a *plentiful* Portion of these ; that so whenever you are shipt *off* into the *eternal* World you may carry such an Estate of them thither with you as may suffice to maintain you there in *Glory* and *Happiness* for ever ; which God of his infinite Mercy grant.

## I JOHN III. 9.

*Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.*

**F**OR the right understanding of these Words, it will be necessary to enquire, *first*, what is here meant by *committing Sin*; *secondly*, what is meant by being *born of God*; *thirdly*, in what sense he that is *born of God* cannot *commit sin*.

First, What is here meant by *committing sin*? I answer, that this *Phrase* in the Writings of this our *Apostle* hath a special *Energy*, and doth not denote the *simple* doing of any *sinful Action*, tho' it be out of Ignorance, Incogitance, or Frailty; nor doth it only denote an *habitual Course* and *Custom* of sinning *wilfully*, but primarily the doing of any *sinful Action* whatsoever *deliberately*, *wilfully*, and *presumptuously*. For as for the *first*, it is not true that he that is *born of God* doth commit no *sin* at all; seeing the *best* of God's Children are liable to be surpriz'd into *evil Actions* through their Weakness, Ignorance, or Inadvertency, of all which, there

there are *some* Remains even in the most purified Natures. And as for the second, viz. the *habit* of sinning wilfully, tho' that in the Apostles Sense is not only to *commit sin*, but to commit it in the most *eminent* Degree; yet it is plain, that it is the *deliberate* Acts of Sin that he here primarily intends: for so Verse the 4th *he that committeth sin transgresseth the Law, for Sin is a Transgression of the Law*; which is plainly meant of every single Act of wilful Sin. So ver. 8. *he that committeth sin is of the Devil*, that is, he is therein an Imitator of the Devil, which is true of every *deliberate Act*, as well as of the *Habit* of Sin. So here in the Text, *he that is born of God doth not commit sin*; that is, understanding him still in the same Sense, he doth not commit any *wilful* and *deliberate* Act of Sin.

2. Our *next* Enquiry is, what is *here* meant by *being born of God*? To which I answer, that to be *born of another*, denotes in general our recovering the Beginning and Principle of our Life and Motion from him, and consequently to be *born of God*, is to receive from *him* through the Operation of his *Grace* and *Spirit*, the Beginning and Principle of our *spiritual* Life and Motion, *viz.* a *considerate, universal, prevailing Resolution* to obey God, proceeding from our Belief of the *Christian Religion*. When

therefore God by the Influence of his *Grace* and *Spirit* hath wrought *our* Minds into such a Resolution, then are we truly born of him, as having herein received from him the Principle of a *new* Life and Motion. And this the Apostle expresses by *being transformed by the renewing of our Mind*, Rom. 12. 2. *i.e.* having a *new practical Judgment* and Resolution of *Soul* begotten in us; and this he elsewhere calls *the renewing of the holy Ghost*, Tit. 3. 5. Upon which account we may very well be said to to be *born of God*; because it is from his *blessed Spirit* that we derive *this Renewing*, which is the Principle of our *spiritual Life and Motion*.

Our *last Enquiry* is in what Sense this Assertion of the Apostle holds, *viz.* That he who is *thus born of God cannot sin*? To which I answer, That this Expression, *he cannot*, relates to the state he is *now* in; he *cannot*, as he is *one* that is born of God, and while he doth continue so; for so the *Phrase* is frequently used in *Scripture*. So Rom. 8. 7. *The carnal mind cannot be subject to God*; not but the *Mind* which is *now carnal*, may *hereafter* be subject unto God, *viz.* when it is *renewed* and *changed*; but it *cannot* be so while it continues *carnal*. And in the same Sense he tells us in the *next Verse*, that *it cannot please God*. So Mat. 7. 18, *a good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit, neither can a corrupt Tree bring*

bring forth good *Fruit*; which can import no more than this, that whilst the *good Tree* continues good, it cannot bring forth *evil Fruits*, nor the *corrupt Tree* bring forth *good Fruits* whilst it continues corrupt; not but that *one* may *hereafter* become *evil*, and bring forth *evil Fruits*, as well as the *other* may become a *good Tree*, and bring forth *good Fruits*. So that the meaning of *he cannot sin*, is no more than this, it is so *utterly inconsistent* with the *State* of *one* that is *born of God*, to sin *wilfully* and *deliberately*, that whenever he doth so, he actually falls from that *blessed State*, and for the time ceases to be *born of God*. And hence the Reason assigned why a *Man* cannot sin *wilfully*, and be *born of God* at the same *Time*, is, *for his Seed remaineth in him*; that is, because that *Principle* of *new Life* and *Motion*, which the *divine Spirit* hath produced in him, and which is nothing else but an *universal, prevailing Resolution* of obeying *God*, remains within his *Breast*, and for a *Man* to be *universally* and *prevalently* resolved to obey *God*, and at the same *Time* to sin *wilfully* is a *Contradiction* in *Terms*; because whenever he sins *wilfully*, he is prevalently resolved to disobey him. And therefore seeing in every *wilful Sin* we are prevalently resolved to disobey *God*, while we are so, our *Resolution* to obey him,

which is the Seed and Principle of our *divine Life*, must *necessarily* be extinguished ; and consequently, till such time as by our Repentance we have revived and recovered it, we must cease to be *born of God*. He therefore who is *born of God*, cannot *sin wilfully*, because while he continues in *this State* his *Seed remains in him* ; which is no more reconcilable to our *sinning wilfully*, than *contraries are in the same Degree*. And therefore he adds, *he cannot sin, because he is born of God* ; that is, his State is such as will no more admit him wilfully to disobey God, than to be *dead and alive* in the same Moment. But in pursuance of this Argument, it will be necessary yet further to enquire what those *wilful Sins* are which the Apostle here declares to be inconsistent with a *good State*, of which is the same thing, with our *being born of God* ; the Resolution of which is of *absolute necessity* to enable Men to make a *true Judgment* of their own State, whether it be *good or bad*. And in order hereunto it will be necessary to premise the following Particulars,

1. That by *wilful Sin*, I mean the *Acts* as well as the *Habits* of Sin.

2. That by *wilful Habits of Sin*, I mean such as are contracted by *wilful Acts*, and are *wilfully retained and indulged*.

3. That

3. That by *wilful* *Acts* of *Sin*, I do not mean all *evil* *Actions* which have any Degree of *Will* in them, but only such as are deliberately chosen.
4. That the *same* *Actions* may be *Sins* of *Weakness*, and *Sins* of *Wilfulness* in the *same*, or *different* *Persons* under *different* *Circumstances*.
1. That by *wilful* *Sins*, I mean the *wilful* *Acts* as well as *Habits* of *Sin*. To be sure there is no *Sin* can be consistent with our being *born of God*, for which the *Gospel* binds us over to *eternal Condemnation*; for while we *thus* stand bound, we are *Children of Wrath*, and so cannot be *Children of God* at the same time. Now the *Law of Christ* condemns us for all *wilful* *Sins* whatsoever, whether they be *single Acts* or *Habits*; and every *single wilful Act* is as much a *Transgression* of the *Law*, which threatens *Condemnation*, as any *wilful Habit* whatsoever. The *Law*, which forbids *wilful Lying* under the *Penalty* of *eternal Death*, doth as well forbid the *single Act*, as the *Habit* of *wilful Lying*, and therefore must forbid them both under the *same Penalty*; and indeed if it did not, there are some of the most *heinous* *sins* would escape. For there are *some Sins* which when *Men* have *once* committed, they never have *Opportunity* to repeat, being prevented either for want of a *new Occasion*,

or by *just* Sentence of Law ; such as *Rape*, and *Theft*, and *Murther* ; and *others*, which can never pass beyond a *single Act*, such as *Parricide* and *Self-murther* ; and so can never grow into an *Habit*: and yet I think there is no Man can doubt but that even the *single Acts* of these Sins ( supposing them *wilful* ) do put a Man into a *state* of Condemnation. I know it is usually said, that such *horrible Sins as these* indeed do so, because the *Mischief* of them is *so great*, and the *Malice* *so heinous* that it renders them *equivalent* to an *Habit* of any other Sin. To which I answer, the Law of *Christ* condemns these *Sins*, not as they are greater than *others*, but as they are *Transgressions* for which it threatens Condemnation. Indeed the greatness of the *Sin* doth increase the Condemnation ; but yet the Law which condemns us for a *lesser Sin*, doth as certainly condemn us, as *that* which condemns us for a *greater*. As for Instance, the Law of *Christ* as well condemns us for *Drunkenness*, *Adultery*, *Lying*, and *Malice*, as for *Murther*. And as every *wilful Act* of *unjust Killing*, is *Murther* ; so every *wilful Act* of *Adultery* and *Malice*, is *Adultery* and *Malice* ; and therefore the Law of *Christ* condemns to far *greater Pains* for the *one* than for the *other* ; yet still it condemns us for both: for that Law, which forbids any *wilful Sin* indifferently under the

Penal-

Penalty of Condemnation, forbids every *Act* of it under the *same* Penalty; because every *Act* of it is the Sin so forbidden; and therefore we may as well say, that the Law of Christ doth not condemn us for *Parricide* and *Self-murther*, because these are only *single Acts* of Murther, as that it doth not condemn us for any other *single Act* of any other *wilful Sin*. For every *single Act* of *wilful Intemperance* and *Incontinency*, are as truly *Sins* against the Law, which forbids them under the Penalty of *eternal Condemnation*, as those *single Acts* of Murther are against the Law which forbids Murther under the same Penalty; and consequently do as well put us into a State of Condemnation; and to be sure, while we are in this State, we cannot pretend to be born of God.

2. I premise that by *wilful Habits* of *sin*, are meant *such* as are contracted by *wilful Acts*, and are wilfully retained, and indulged. For if you take *Habits* of *Sin* in the *largest Sense*, as they signify a *forward Propensity*, *Promptness*, and *Readiness* to *do Evil*, there is no doubt but there may be *sinful Habits* in Men, which never were contracted by *wilful Acts*, as on the contrary, there may be *sinful Habits* contracted by *wilful Acts*, which tho' not utterly extirpated, may yet cease to be *wilful*. As for Instance, a Man may be prompted to *unreasonable*

nable Anger, or excessive Lust, even from the natural Temper and Constitution of his Body, without the Concurrence of any *wilful Acts* of his own; and tho' he may be much more disposed to be angry or lustful than another of a cooler Constitution, yet he may be much farther removed from any *wilful Habit* of Anger and Lust, because the latter perhaps contracted them by his own *wilful Acts*, and by his repeated Practice of them, doth still cherish and indulge them; whereas the former had no more hand in contracting them, than he had in the moulding of his own Constitution, and is so far from cherishing them by any *wilful Acts* of his own, that it is the *main* endeavour of his Life to oppose and vanquish them. And so on the other hand, a Man that by frequent *wilful Acts* of Sin, hath contracted *wilful Habits*, may afterwards heartily repent, and take up a *prevailing Resolution* of Amendment, and yet still the *evil Habit*, the *Prompness*, or *Propensity* to his Sin, may be more or less remaining in him; but this is now so far from being wilful, that the prevailing Bent and Current of his Will is against it; and tho' still his *evil Inclinations* are ready to take fire upon every *Spark* of Temptation that falls upon them, and to *blaze* out into *evil Actions*; yet by the Strength of his Resolution he *so* keeps it under, that it cannot

break forth but upon a surprize, and even that Surprize will render him more *watchful* and *vigilant* to suppress it for the future. But now when *evil Habits* do not only exist in us, but are also *cherished* and *indulged* by us, and do ordinarily influence and govern our Practice; they are then not only *wilful Sins*, but a *fixt* and *settled State of wilful Sins*; and are pregnant with a *distinct* *Guilt* and *Venom* from those *Acts of wilful Sin*, that begot them. And hence in Scripture you find them markt with the *blackest* *Characters*; they are called, *the Root of bitterness*, *the evil Heart*, *the Concupiscence wrought by Sin*, *the Law in the Members*, which those who are *carnal* and *sold under Sin* do obey, *the carnal Mind*, *the Flesh in which dwells no good*, and *enmity to God*: by all which they are *sufficiently pronounced inconsistent* with our being *born of God*.

3. I must premise that by *wilful Acts of Sin* I do not mean all *wilful Actions* which have any Degree of *Will* in them, but only such as are *deliberately chose* and *consented to*. Every *sin* is so far *voluntary*, as that when we choose it we are free to refuse it; otherwise it is *necessary*; and what is *necessary*, is no *Fault*, nor can be justly liable to *Reward*, or *Punishment*. Those *evil Actions* therefore, which, for *Distinction sake*, are called *sins of Infirmit*y, are no farther Sins

Sins than as they are chosen, and have some Intermixture of Will in them; for if they have none, they have only the *Matter* of Sin in them, but not the *Form*. But we are seldom so surprized with any Temptation to *Evil*, but that it is possible for us to deliberate upon it; and thereupon to resolve against it; and many Times by our Care and Watchfulness we do prevent those *Evils*, which, when we are more remiss, do steal upon us *unawares*: and we that can prevent them *this Moment*, can prevent them the *next* too, and so the *next*, and so *for ever*. But then considering the *Weakness* and *Imperfection* of our Natures, how our *Wills* are byassed with *bad Habits* and *Inclinations*, and our *Thoughts* dispersed and squander'd among the *infinite* Diversions that surround us; it is morally impossible, that is, it is not reasonably to be expected that in these Circumstances we should be *always* upon our Guard against every *evil Object* without, and every *evil Motion* within us, so as never to be surprized, or to act unadvisedly. Whenever therefore we are so surprized into an *evil Action*, as that we could not consider if we would, either for Want of Time, or for Want of *Order* and *Distinction* in our *Thoughts* occasioned by some *sudden* *Tumult* of *Passion*; *this* is not our Fault, but our Infelicity; because our *Will* is no way

CON-

concerned in it. But when we are so surprised, as that notwithstanding we might have considered, had we taken all due Care to recollect *our selves* and exert our *utmost* Attention; *this* is partly *our* Fault; because there is something of Will in it; but more *our* Infelicity, because there is more of Weakness and Infirmitiy than Will in it; and therefore is called a *sin of Infirmitiy*, which by the *merciful* Indulgence of the *Gospel* is discharged of Course from all *eternal* Penalties. But if when we are tempted, we either designedly omit to consider, or consent upon Consideration; *this* is *pure* Malice of Will, which, while we are *born* of God, can have no Place in us.

4. And lastly, I must premise, that the same Actions may be *Sins of Weakness* and *Sins of Wilfulness* in the *same*, or in *different* Persons under different Circumstances. For seeing it is the *willing* of an *evil* Action that makes it be a *sin*, it necessarily follows, that it is the *willing* of it in a *greater* or a *lesser* Degree that makes it a *greater* or a *lesser* Sin; and it is certain that the same sin may have *more* or *less* of Will in it in the *same*, or *different* Persons under different Circumstances. As for Instance; *one* Man may be excusably ignorant of the *Evil* of such an Action, which *another* doth either know to be a *Sin*, or would have known it had he

net

not been wilfully ignorant ; and that Sin, which *this* Man commits upon Deliberation, *another* may be hurried into on a sudden surprize, in which Case, tho' both do the same Act, and in some Sense both do it willingly too, yet because the *one* wills it more intensely than the *other*, it is a *Sin of Wilfulness* in the *one*, and a *Sin of Infirmity* in the *other*. And this holds true also in the *same* Person, who may do the *same* Action ignorantly and inconsiderately at *one* Time, and knowingly and advisedly at *another* ; and if, when he hath fallen into any Sin unawares, he is wilfully careless and neglective to prevent the Return of it ; that which now is a *pitiab*le *Weakness*, and as such falls under the *general* *Indulgence* of the *Gospel*, will anon be *inexcusab*le *Obstinacy*. From all which it is apparent, that it is not the Kind of the Sin, but the *Will* of the Sinner that makes the Difference between *Sins of Weakness* and *Wilfulness* ; seeing the same Sins according to the *different* Degrees of Will that are in them may be *Sins of Infirmity* at *one* time, and *Sins of Obstinacy* at *another*. For so by the *Law of England* the same *Act* of Killing is distinguished into *Chance-medly*, *Manslaughter*, and *Murther* ; the *first* of which is *innocent*, because it hath no Will in it ; the *second* *pitiab*, because but imperfectly willed ; the *third* *capital*,

pital, because freely chosen, and fully consented to. And so also by the *Christian Law* the very same *Act* under *different Circumstances* may be an *innocent Error*, a *sin of Infirmity*, and a *sin of Wilfulness*; for if it be perfectly *involuntary*, it is an *innocent Error*; if imperfectly *willed*, it is a *sin of Infirmity*; but if fully consented to, a *sin of Wilfulness*. So long therefore as the Temptations of Men are so infinitely *various*, and their Capacities of resisting so *unequal*, in different Persons, there will be *more or less* of *Will* in the *same Actions*; and the same *Act* will be far more excusable where there is a *greater Temptation* to it, and a *less Power* of resisting, then it can be, when the Temptation is *less*, and the Power of resisting it *greater*. All that can be done therefore in the *Case* before us is this, to lay down such *general Rules* of *Distinction* between *Sins of Infirmity*, and *Sins of Wilfulness*, as that thereby every *Man*, that hath the *free Use* of *his own Faculties* may, upon a *due Consideration* of his *Particular Circumstances*, distinguish whether his *Sin* be *wilful* or no. For when all is done every *Man* must thus far be *his own Casuist*; it being impossible for *another* to determine what *Degrees of Will* there are in his *Sin*, unless he knew under what *Circumstances* he committed it; because *different Circum-*

Circumstances do vary the Case, and make the Sin be *more* or *less* voluntary.

These Things premised, I come now particularly to state what those Sins are, upon the Commission of which we cease to be *born of God*: and these I shall rank under 3 Heads: 1. Sins of *wilful Ignorance*. 2. Sins of *wilful Inconsideration*. 3. Sins against *Knowledge and Consideration*.

1. Sins of *wilful Ignorance*; I say *wilful*, to exclude all *invincible* and *unaffected Ignorance*: By *invincible Ignorance* I mean such, as we neither do nor can surmount by the *utmost Improvement* we can make of our Reason. For sure not to understand, *what we cannot understand*, is not at all *criminal*; and if our Ignorance be *innocent*, whatever is the *necessary Effect* of it must be so too; all *necessary Effects* being of a *common Nature* with their *Causes*. And certainly no Man breathing can be *innocent*, if he be not so who acts to the *best* of his *Knowledge*, and knows to the *best* of his *Capacity*. For so our *Saviour* himself pronounces concerning the *Pharisees*; *If ye were blind ye should have no sin, but now you say that you see, therefore your sin remains*, John 9. 4.

By *unaffected Ignorance* I mean such as is *vincible*, but by Reason of some *innocent Hindrances*, such as the *Obscurity of the Object*, or the *Weakness of the Capacity*, or

the

the *innocent* Prejudice and Prepossession of the *Understanding*, is not to be removed without *extreme* Difficulty; which tho' it be so far sinful, as it is within the *Reach* of our Power to be better informed; yet is by no Means to be accounted a *wilful* Sin. For if it be *wilful* Sin not to know and do the Will of God to the *utmost* of our Power, there is no Sin in the World but what is *wilful*; because it is no Sin at all not to do more than our *utmost*. But then there is a *wilful* and *affected* Ignorance, which proceeds either from our *prophane* Contempt and *Regardlessness* of God, by which we have so far extinguished our *natural* Sense of *Religion*, as not to think it *worth* the while to concern our selves about it, and so rudely stop our Ears against all the *Means* of Instruction; or else this *wilful* Ignorance arises from some *sinful* Prejudice against the Knowledge of the Truth begotten in us by some *darling* Lust, which, that we may quietly enjoy without any *Remorse* of Conscience, we industriously shun all the *Means* of Conviction; and either exclude all Thoughts of *Religion* from our Minds lest they should discover to us the *Evil* and *Danger* of our Sin, (which is the way of those who are openly *prophane*, and *irreligious*;) or indeavour to wheadle our own *Understandings* to such *false* Opinions as are *soft* and

and *easy* and *indulgent* to our Lusts, (which is the way of *Hypocrites* and *false Pretenders to Religion*.) Now as for this Sort of Ignorance, it springs from a *wicked Will*, and is not so much to be imputed to the *Weakness* of our Understandings, as to the *Depravedness* of our Affections; they are the *impure Vapours* from *below* that cloud the *Sky above*, and overcast the *intellectual Region* with *Darkness* and *Confusion*. And if we are ignorant of our Duty, because we will not be informed; our Ignorance is so far from excusing our Neglect of it, that it self is *inexcusable*. If I commit a Sin, because I am wilfully ignorant, the Wilfulness of my Ignorance makes my Sin to be *wilful*. Here the *Effect* always partakes of the *Nature* of the *Cause*, and derives into its self all its *Venom* and *Malignity*; and therefore if my Ignorance be a *wilful Sin*, whatever Sins it betrays me into, they must be *all wilful* as well as that. And hence our *Saviour* tells us, that this is the *condemnation*, that *light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light*, John 3. 19.

2. Another Sort of *wilful Sins* are Sins of *wilful Inconsideration*. I say *wilful*, because there are *fundry Evils* whereinto we are perfectly surprized; as when Temptations start out so suddenly upon us, as that either for Want of Time, or the *great Hurry* and *Tumult*

Tumult it puts our Thoughts into, it is not in our Power to consider and deliberate, in which Case we are not *capable* Subjects of Law and Morality. For that which makes us *capable* Subjects is first, that we are *material* Agents, and so can deliberate what is *best* to choose. 2. That we are *free* Agents, and so can choose what is *best* upon Deliberation; without which *Madmen* and *natural Fools* are as *capable* Subjects of Law as we. Whenever therefore our Circumstances are such that we cannot deliberate, and choose upon Deliberation, tho' the Actions we do are *materially* Evils, yet are they not *formally* Sins; because while we do them we are not *capable* Subjects of the Law that forbids them, nor consequently accountable to it. As for Instance; it is doubtless a great Sin and deserves a great Punishment, for a Man to wound his Friend, or abuse his Benefactor; but yet in a *Madman* it is no Sin at all, because when he doth it, he is incapable of being governed by the Law that forbids it. And this I judge is the Case of Men under perfect surprises, when they are violently hurried into *evil* Actions in a *sudden* Distraction and Confusion of Thoughts; which doubtless may sometimes be the Case of very good Men, especially under *great* Pains, or the *sudden* Appearance of *frightful* Dangers, which

for the *present* at least may distract and scare them out of all Capacity and Deliberation; and at *other Times*, while their Thoughts are *innocently* wandering among the *various* Variety of *outward Objects*, a Temptation may suddenly break in, and prevail upon them before they have Time to recollect themselves. For we find by Experience, that the *Mind* hath not that *absolute Dominion* over the *Will* as to make it choose or refuse at its beck upon the *bare Proposal* of *good* or *evil* Objects; but many Times before it can prevail is fain to dispute it *out* with our *Passions* and *Appetites*, and to oppose their Importunities with more *prevailing Motives* to the contrary; and therefore if it should so fall out that in that Moment when the Temptation comes, the *Mind* shall be very much *diverted* by *other Employments*, it is in many Cases *morally impossible*, but *Passion* and *Appetite* should prevail, and obtain our *Content* before the *Mind* is aware of it; because that being at present otherwise employed; and always unable to attend *many Things* at once, it cannot be ready in the *present Exigence* immediately to urge the *Arguments* on its *own side*, and to detect the *Fallacies* on the *other*. Tho' this I confess, will hardly hold in any gross *Acts* of *Sin*, because in these there is generally *some Pause* and *Interval* between the Temptation

ptation and the Action; where in the Mind may easily be advised with, which if it be a good Mind cannot fail to suggest sufficient Arguments against it: But if the Temptation doth so hurry the Man, as that he cannot deliberate, he is so far *innocent*; and if as soon as he considers, he retracts the *evil Consent* into which his Will was surprised, before it passes into Action; or if having acted it, before he was aware, he becomes more wary and watchful for the future, it is not so much his Fault as his Misery. 'Tis true, there are surprizes of Temptations which are not *innocent*; but then the Reason is, because they are not *pure* surprizes, but such as do not incapacitate us to deliberate; and if when it is in our power we either do not deliberate at all, or not enough, but make a *raſh* and *foolish* Choice; when, if we had used our *utmost* Care, we might have chosen those advisedly; our Choice is *culpable*, and so is the Action thence proceeding. But seeing ours is the *Religion* of *Men* and not of *Angels*, and it cannot reasonably be expected, considering our Circumstances, that we should *always* do as well as possibly we can, it is to be supposed that this *Religion* of ours, which is purposely accommodated to our *imperfect* State, admits us to be *good* in the *Main*, tho' we are not so to *Perfection*, or which is the same Thing,

to the utmost of our Possibility. For while our Soul is fain to minister to a Body, and hath so quick a sense of its Necessities, and while we are encompassed with so vast a Variety of tempting Objects, and our Thoughts are so dispersed and squandered among them; it is morally impossible, but that many of our Actions should be *unadvised*, and pass our Watch without a severe Examination: nor can it reasonably be expected, that we should in all Cases, where it is in our Power, so precisely weigh every minute Circumstance of our Actions, as to determine exactly on which side our duty lies; and therefore should our Religion exact this of us without any Mitigation or Abatement, I doubt that even the best of Men would never be able to abide the Test of it. But then besides this Kind of Inconsideration, which is either purely *involuntary*, and by consequence *innocent*, or but partly *voluntary*, and so *excusable*; there is another Sort of it, which is absolutely and inexorably *wilful*. And this is twofold, *viz.* *actual* and *habitual*. Actual is either when, notwithstanding we have been sufficiently forewarned by precedent Surprises, we are wilfully neglective of our selves, and take no Care to fortify our Minds by Consideration against them in Case they should return again upon us; or when upon the

Appear-

Appearance of a *prevailing Temptation* we either quench the good Motions of *our own Consciences*, and refuse to consider the *Evil and Danger* of the *Sin* we are tempted to, lest we should be deterred from committing it; or purposelly contrive to baffle *our own Consideration* and to render it ineffectual by opposing against it either some *ungrounded Hope of Impunity*, or some *fallacious Promise of future Amendment*. In all which Cases *our Inconsideration* is apparently *wilful*, and so consequently must the *Sins* be, which follow upon it; and he who pleads his *own wilful Inconsideration* as an *Excuse* for his *Sin*, doth only *Apologize* for one *Fault* by another, which instead of *extenuating inflames and aggravates* it. And then as for *habitual Inconsideration* it is the *Effect* of our *frequent stifling* the *Convictions* of *our own Consciences*, whereby we *sear* them into a *deep Intensibility of Good and Evil*, so as that at last we *Sin* on without *Remorse*, and return to our *Lusts* with a *perfect Indifferency* without ever *considering* what we do, or *reflecting* upon what we have done. Now as it is no *excuse* for *our Sin* if it proceeds from a *sinful Habit* contracted by *frequent Acts of wilful Sin*, so neither will it excuse our *Sin* that it proceeds from an *habitual Inconsideration* contracted by *often refusing to consider*. And

as *vicious Habits* have a proper Evil and Guiltiness in them distinct from those *vicious Acts* that produce them, so *habitual Inconsideration* hath in it a peculiar Venom of its own beyond what was in those *wilful Acts of Inconsideration* whereby it was contracted. And accordingly in *Scripture* it is described as the most *desperate State of Sinners*: it is to be *past feeling*, which was the *Condition of the leudeſt and moſt irreclaimable Gentiles*, *Eph. 4. 19.* it is to have a *ſearched conscience*, the *Character of Sinners under the laſt Apostacy*, *1 Tim. 4. 2.* it is to have a *reprobate Mind*, which was the *Cause and Effect of the fouleſt Gentile Impieties*, *1 Rom. 28, 29.* In a word it is to have a *hard and unrelenting Heart*, by which Men are said to *treasure up wrath against the day of wrath*, *Rom. 2. 5.*

3. And laſtly, another Sort of *wilful Sins* are ſuch as are *wilfully committed against Knowledge and Consideration*. I ſay again *wilfully*, to exclude those *known Evils*, which either we do not at all consent to, or very im- perfectly. For it is a *known Evil* for a Man to *rove in his Devotions*, or to think *blasphemous Thoughts of God*, or to be *drowsy and listleſs in our Addreſſes to him*; and yet many times these are the *necessary Effects* even of *innocent Causes*, ſuch as *Melancholy*, or *Weariness*, or *antecedent Thoughtfulness*;

and

and therefore tho' they are *evil* in the Matter, yet because they necessarily proceed from such Causes as are not *evil*, we are no more accountable for them than for the *Returns* of our Appetite, or the *Palpitation* of our Heart: and if we do not indulge our *Drowsiness*, nor harbour and entertain our *evil* *Thoughts*, but throw them out of our Minds as soon as we observe them, and keep a more *careful* *Watch* to prevent their *Return*, our *Will* is *innocent*, and so long we may be sure God will not condemn us for our *Weakness*. Again, it is a *known* *Evil* for a Man to be angry *without* a *Cause*, or to have an *unchast* *Desire*, or to *love*, or *hate*, or *hope*, or *fear*, or *rejoyce*, or *grieve* unreasonably; yet these *Evils* are such as *no* *Care* can wholly prevent, and against which *no* *Watchfulness* is a *sufficient* *Guard*. And tho' in many of these Instances there be many times *so much* of our *Will* intermingled as to render us *culpable*, yet this is not sufficient to *extinguish* the *Principle* of our *Regeneration*, or to degrade us into a *State* of *Wickedness*. But when a Man knows that such an *Action* is *evil*, and either *actually* considers that it is so, or neglects to consider it through *habitual* *Inconsideration*, and thereupon actually consents to it; he doth hereby *openly* *defy* *God*, and *maliciously* *trample* upon his *Authority*, being

desperately resolved to pursue his *sinful* Desire let God and his Conscience say what they can to the contrary; which is such an Height of *wilful Malice* as no *Apology* can extenuate. Hence our Saviour pronounces that *the servant that knows his Masters will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes*, Luke 12. 47. And accordingly St. James tells us, that *he that knows to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin*; that is, 'tis a very great and *unexcusable Sin*, James 4. 17, and St. Paul assures us that *the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness*; that is, who know the Truth, and yet wilfully sin against their Knowledge, Rom. 1. 18. and to name no more Heb. 10. 26. we are told, that if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sin; which Words are to be understood according to the general Anallogy of the Gospel [if we sin wilfully] i. e. if we are deliberately guilty of any known Sin [after we have received the knowledge of the truth] i. e. have been *catechized* and *baptized* in the Christian Faith [there remains no more sacrifice for sin] i. e. unless we recover our selves by Repentance, and Amendment of the Fact. And seeing that where we sin wilfully the Virtue of the

great

great sacrifice for Sin hath no Place without a special and particular Repentance, and consequently there is no other Remedy left for us in the Gospel, all that remains is what follows in the next verse, viz. a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery indignation to devour the adversary. From whence it follows that upon our faining knowingly and wilfully in any particular instance, we fall into a State of Wrath and Condemnation, and consequently fall from the happy State of our Regeneration, or being born of God.

And now to conclude this Argument, from the whole I infer the horrible Evil of consenting to any known Sin, after we have entered into good Resolutions to the contrary; which will plainly appear upon the following Considerations.

1. Consider the shameful Weakness and Impotency of it. For such Resolutions, if they are well formed, are grounded on the strongest and most momentous Reasons in the world; and for a Man to cancel a Resolution inforsed with such powerful Motives for a meer Vanity, or to gratify some foolish and importunate Lust, the Pleasure of which dyes away in the Enjoyment, argues him to have a base and prostitute Mind, that hath no Strength of Thought, or stedfastness of Will in it, but is wifled up and down like a Feather in the Air by every little Counterblast of Wind.

2. Con-

Consider the prodigious Hazard to which we expose our selves by it. For by every *wilful Sin* after such a Resolution we throw our selves headlong from the *best* into the *worst* Estate in the world, from a State of *Love* into a State of *Wrath*, from being *born of God* to being a *Son of perdition*; and if we thence be snatched away, before we have recovered our *Relapse*, (as who knows but we may,) we shall dye for ever, and by one *desperate Act* of *Folly* fall from *Heaven* into *Hell*. But suppose we should *survive* our *Sin*, and be allowed a space of *Repentance*; yet is it a *mighty Hazard* whether ever we make a *good Use* of it. For when by one *wilful Sin* we have made a *Breach* into our *good Resolution*, in all probability *that* will open a *Gap* for *another* to follow, and *that* for *another*, till hereby our *evil Habits* at last recover their *full Power*, and then our *Will* and *Practice* will be laid open again into a common *Thoroughfare* of *Iniquity*. For when we consented to the *first Sin* it was with a *Promise* of *repenting immediately*, and upon the *same* *Promise* in all probability upon the *next Temptation* we shall consent to a *second*, and so to a *third*; and by this Train the *Devil* will tole us *an* *through* a *long Course* of *Sin*, still at length our *Will* is *depraved* again, and our *Conscience* *seared*, and then we

we shall lay aside all Thoughts of Repentance.

3. Consider the great Sorrow and Remorse that must follow upon our Sin, in Case we should repent of it. For to be sure before we can heartily repent of it, our Mind must be stung with many severe Reflections upon our own wretched Weakness and Impotence, and our Falseness and Perfidiousness to our own Engagements and Resolutions, upon the Affront we have given to our good God, and the vile Contempt we have offer'd to his most righteous Authority, and our ungrateful grieving his holy Spirit, whereby, before we committed this Wickedness, we were sealed unto the day of Redemption: all which if we have any thing of good Nature and Ingenuity, and much more if we have any the least Foot-step or Remains of that divine Seed, by which we were born of God, must necessarily create in us a most pungent Sorrow and Remorse, whenever we reflect upon it; a Sorrow that will be much more than equivalent to the highest Pleasure we can hope for from any wilful Sin: and for a Man to commit such a Sin upon a Presumption that he shall repent of it, when he cannot but foresee, if he be in his Wits, that his Repentance will cost him far more sorrow than his sin will yield him Pleasure, is all Folly and Madness.

4. Con-

Consider how much of that Ground we lose back by every *wilful Sin* which by hitherto keeping true to our *good Resolution* we had gotten against our *evil Inclinations*. Our *Religion* can never be easy to us till in some good Measure we have *mortified* and *extinguished* our *depraved Inclinations*; for till then in the whole Course of our *Religious Practice* we shall row against the Stream, and be continually warring against and doing Violence to our selves. But if when a Man hath once entered into a *good Resolution* he takes care to pursue it, he will find by degrees his *bad Inclinations* decay and *wear off*; and proportionably, as they decay, *Piety* and *Virtue* will grow more and more natural and easy to him. But when a Man hath for some time faithfully pursued his *good Resolution*, and hath thereby got a great deal of Ground of his *bad Inclinations*, if then he unravels it by any one *wilful Act of Sin*, his *bad Inclinations* will thereby recover all those Degrees of Strength and Vigour which they lost in the *past* Course of his *Piety* and *Virtue*; so that now he must be forced to begin the *whole* Work of his *Religion* again, and to struggle through all those Difficulties, which he had before surmounted. Now he must fight over again all the Victories he had gotten, before he can regain *that Command* and

2d Empire of himself, to which he was entit-  
ed before he revolted from his good Re-  
lution; and thus for a Moment Satisfaction  
he foolishly creates himself a long and se-  
cure Labour, but all void of use; nay  
5. And lastly consider how by every wil-  
ful Sin you will weaken and impair those  
comfortable Hopes you should arrive to by  
persevering in your good Resolutions. While  
you persevere in ~~W~~ <sup>W</sup> ~~el~~ doing my counsels  
will be all a long entertained and reflected  
with the growing Hopes of your Reconci-  
liation with God at present, and of a glori-  
ous Immortality to succeed; and those bles-  
sed Hopes will every Day improve upon  
your Hands, till at length they are ripened  
into a full Assurance; the Comfort of  
which will mightily spirit and invigil all  
your Religious Endeavours, and carry you  
on with indefatigable Vigour through all  
the weary Stages of your Duty. But now  
by committing of any wilful Sin, thereby  
you throw your selves out of the Arms of  
God's Favour, and give up all your Preten-  
sions to eternal Happiness; and tho' by your  
serious Repentance you should afterwards re-  
cover to the blessed Condition from whence  
you are fallen, yet in all Probability it will  
be a great while before you will be able to  
recover those blessed Hopes from whence  
you are fallen. For the Sense of your past

Lapie,

Laps, if you have any Modesty in you, will make you very anxious and doubtful of your selves and render you extremely fearful and suspicious, lest you should fall again; and so only sin and repent, and repeat and sin, only still at length you have sinned your selves beyond all Repentance; and those very just Fears and Jealousies will very much hinder the Growth of your Hopes, and cause them to spring by slow and insensible Degrees.

John 3:19. The world hateth me because I testify of it, that it is not in it. John 3:20. And because it abode not in me, that I could testify of it. John 3:21. But ye have abomination of me, because I testify of you that ye are of the devil. John 3:22. For I have not given you spirit of flesh and blood, but spirit of God, which abideth in me, and I have sent you to bring forth fruit worthy of repentance. John 3:23. Who be ye that excuse sinners? John 3:24. Except ye repent, ye shall surely die. John 3:25. And he said unto them, I speak not of you that sin, but of the world. John 3:26. For they hate me, and they hate my Father, and they hate me because I testify of them, that their works are evil. John 3:27. But ye are of the world. John 3:28. Therefore I speak unto you a parable: Behold, a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while his men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. John 3:29. But when the harvest was made, the reapers said, Master, first let us gather the tares, and cast them into the fire; but let us gather the wheat into thy barn. John 3:30. But he said unto them, No, let them be gathered together, and cast into the fire; but the wheat let us gather into my barn.

JOHN XIV. 27.

*Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you: not as the World giveth, give I unto you: Let not your Heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

**T**hese Words are a Part of our Saviour's farewell Discourse to his Disciples, in which after he had given them some necessary Instructions for the Information of their Faith, and Conduct of their Manners, in which after he had comforted them with the Assurance that e'er long he would return again to them by his holy Spirit, and assist them in their Work, and support them under their Troubles, he takes a solemn leave of them, *Peace I leave with you.* Which among the Hebrews was the usual Form of Salvation when they met or parted, *Shalom Lacha,* *Peace be unto you;* where, by *Peace,* they meant all manner of *Blessings;* so that it was equivalent to all those Three Salutations among the Greeks, *χαίρειν, εὐταίνειν, εὐτελέσθαι,* in which they wished to each other Satisfaction of Mind, Health of Body, and Success of Affairs. So that in this Salutation *Peace I leave with you,* our Saviour wishes all

Good

Good to his Disciples, of which, Peace strictly taken, is one of the principal Instances. Nor, saith he, do I only wish Peace to you in general, but I give you my Peace, or the Wish and Salutation of my Peace, which is a much better Peace than that which Men have hitherto enjoyed, an inward Peace of Mind and Soul founded upon much surer Grounds and better Principles than those which natural Reason and Philosophy pretend to. And this new kind of Peace which is properly mine, because founded upon my Principles, *I give unto you*, not as the world giveth, give *I unto you*. The Men of the World give the Salutation of Peace to each other many times out of mere Compliment, without any real Wish, or hearty meaning, and when they mean what they say, it is commonly nothing but an empty impotent Wish that conduces nothing, or at least, not enough to the Peace and Satisfaction of those whom they salute. But as for my part, as I give you the Salutation of Peace, so I heartily mean and wish that you may enjoy it, nor do I only wish you Peace, but I have also taken Care to furnish you with such abundant Means, and effectual Principles of Peace, as that if you are not extremely wanting to your selves, you cannot long be without it. The Words thus Explained, the Sense of them may be resolved into this Proposition.

That

That our blessed Lord as he heartily wishes *Peace* and *Quiet* of Mind to all his Disciples and Followers, so he hath taken Care to furnish them with the most *sufficient* and *effectual* Means to obtain it: the Truth of which, evidently appears upon a full Consideration of these Two Particulars: *First*, that he hath taken the most *effectual* Care to remove from us all the Causes of *Trouble* and *Disquiet* of Mind. *Secondly*, that he hath taken Care to supply us with the most *effectual* Principles of *Peace* and *Satisfaction* of Mind.

1. I begin with the *first* of these, *viz.* that our blessed Lord hath taken the most *effectual* Care to remove from us all the Causes of *Trouble* and *Disquiet* of Mind; and they are principally these Five.

1. The Sense of Guilt.
2. *False* and *extravagant* Estimations of the good Things of the World.
3. Our taking up *wrong* Measures and Opinions of the *Evils* of the World.
4. An *effeminate* Softness and Delicacy of Temper.
5. Misplacing of our *Happiness* in Things that are out of our own Power.

1. One Cause of *disquiet* of Mind, is the Sense of Guilt. For God hath imprinted such an *awful* Apprehension of his own *invisible* Power and Majesty on our Minds, that

whenever we reflect upon the manifold Provocations we have given him, to arm his *Omnipotent Vengeance* against us, it must naturally suggest very *anxious* and *direful* Thoughts to our Minds, and fill us with *black* and *horrible* Apprehensions of the *fatal* Consequents of his Wrath and Displeasure against us. So that till such time as Men have stupified their *natural* Sense of God by a *long Custom*, and *inveterate Habit* of sinning, it will be as impossible for them to be at Peace under the Apprehension of his Displeasure, as it is to sleep with an *Alarm* in their Ears. But till such time as our *Saviour* had procured for us the *new Covenant*, by which God hath solemnly obliged himself to pardon us upon our Repentance; *sinful* Men, tho' *true* Penitents, could never have arrived at that Degree of Security, that God was reconciled to them, as is necessary to set their Minds at Rest, and free them from all Anxiety. For tho' to repent is the *best* thing a Sinner can do, yet this doth not at all alter the Nature of the *Sin* he repents of, so as to render it *less* evil, or *less* deserving of Punishment; and so long as the Desert of Punishment remains, God hath a *natural* Right to execute it, and so long we can never be certain whether he will exact it or no. Some wavering Hopes a poor Penitent might have arrived to, upon the Consideration

sideration of the *infinite* Benignity of the divine Nature, but the utmost Comfort he could have given himself, was that of the penitent King of Nineveh; *who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?* Jonah 3. 9. But alas! when a Man's Mind is *hagg'd* and *ridden* with his Guilts, *who can tell?* is such a *poor* Relief as must necessarily leave it extremely anxious and disponding. But now upon our Saviour's procuring for us the *new Covenant*, you and I, and every one of us can tell, and that with as much certainty as that God is true, that if we do repent, and turn from our *evil* Ways, God will turn, and repent of his Anger, and Displeasure against us. So that now all we have to do is to reflect upon our selves, and examin whether we are *true* Penitents or no, whether we have submitted our Will to Gods, with a *full* Purpose and Resolution to fly whatever he forbids, and follow whatever he commands us; and if we have, we may upon the Terms of the *New Covenant*, from thence as certainly conclude that he is reconciled to us, and that his *high* Displeasure against us, is all converted into the *dearest* Kindness and Complacency, as we can that he is *God*, or which is all one, that he is *true* and *faithful*; which doubtless is one of the most *solid* Foundations of Peace and Satisfaction in the

E e 2      World.

World. For what can disturb me while I feel my self lodged in *his* Arms and Embraces whose Wisdom, I am sure, no *Craft* can out-wit, and with whose *Power* no *Force* is able to contend. Here I dwell as in an *impregnable* Fortress, where nothing can come at me, but what is for my *good*; how then can any thing prove *adverse* to me, while he is my *Friend*, in whose Hands and Disposal every thing that concerns me is placed?

2. Another Cause of Disquiet of Mind, is our *false* and *extravagant* Estimations of the *good* Things of this World. The main Spring of those Troubles which perplex our Minds, is the *Goods* and *Evils* that are without us, and without our Power and Disposal, in which we commonly fancy far more *Good* and *Evil* than really there is. We look upon the *good* Things of this World as *unskilful* Spectators do on *Landskips*, in which while they stand at a Distance, they fancy they behold *here* a *smiling* Meadow, *there* a *delightful* Grove, and *there* a *lofty* Mountain; but upon a *nearer* Approach, and more *considerate* View, find all this *goodly* Prospect to be nothing but a *course* Canvas artificially painted with Colours and Shadows. Thus while we behold the *Riches*, the *Pleasures*, and the *Honours* of this World at a Distance, to our *wild* Imaginations there appear *vast* Mountains of Happiness in them, *fruitful* Fields

Fields of Pleasure, *delightful Groves* of Content and Satisfaction, which while we are in the pursuit of them, fills our Minds full of Cares, and *anxious* and *solicitous* Thoughts about them ; but then as we approach nearer to them, and come to survey them more closely, the Mountains presently dwindle into *Mole-hills*, the Fields and the Groves into *empty Shadows* ; and after all our Labour and Care to possess our selves of them, our *Enjoyment* of them amounts not to the Tithe of our *Hope*, and so we are still restless and unsatisfied, both while we are in the Quest, and while we are in the Possession of them. While we are in the Pursuit of them, we are *wild* and *imaginative* ; we swell with *fantastick Joys*, and juggle our selves into Expectations as great and *eager* as *our own Desires* ; but as soon as we are possessed of them, we presently find their Vanity and Emptiness, and perceiving how *little* they are able to perform of those *vast* Things they promised us, our *abused* Fancy that had raised it self with such *high* and *swelling* Expectations, falls flat underneath the Disappointments of Fruition, and so while we are following, we are restless, and when we have overtaken them, we are dissatisfied ; all which arises from those *extravagant* Estimations we make of them. Whereas did we but value them as they are,

and according to the *true Rules of Reason and Religion*, we should pursue them with *far more Indifference*, and enjoy them with *far more Content*. While we are in pursuit of them, we should look upon them as *Things without which we may be happy*, and consequently as *Things that have not worth enough in them to deserve of us any mighty Care or Solicitude*, and so we should follow them with a *calm and sedate Mind*; and entering into the Possession of them with a *moderate Expectation*, we should find every Thing in them, that we hoped for; for all the *Good* that they promised, they would be sure to perform, and so we should have *no disappointed Hope* to vex and disturb us, but our *Expectation* would be intirely satisfied in our *Enjoyment*. Thus would we take care to fix in our *Minds a true Estimation of the good Things of this World*, and to prize them at those *Rates* that our *Religion* sets upon them, they would never be able to give us half the *Disturbance* they now do; for then we should look upon them as *Things that are extrinsick to our Happiness*, as *Things that we may want without Damage, or enjoy without Advantage to our main Interest*; and esteeming them as such, we should pursue them with much *less Concern*, and enjoy them with much *more Satisfaction*; We should not be vexed with such an *impatient Desire* of

of gaining them, nor alarmed with so many tormenting Fears of losing them ; but with St. Paul we should know both *how to want* them, and *how to abound* in them, and to undergo both Fortunes with a *calm, and cheerful* Mind.

3. Another Cause of Disquiet of Mind, is our taking up *wrong* Measures and Opinions of the *Evils* of the World. As for those *Evils* which are only the Objects of our *Faith* and *Reason*, and such are the *eternal Evils* of the *other* World, we are always apt to lessen and diminish them, and flatter ourselves with *soft* and *ease* Apprehensions of them ; but as for those that strike upon our Sense, we are ever prone to swell and magnifie them ; which is the reason that the *former* disquiet us *too* little, and the *latter* *too* much, tho' our Disquiet for the *one* is necessary to prevent them, whereas our Trouble for the *other* doth only serve to render them more grievous and oppressive. For the *greatest* Power these *outward sensible* *Evils* have to hurt and damnifie us, they derive from *our own* *Imagination*, which oftentimes disguises them in *grim* and *frightful* *Vizards*, and makes them appear to us a Thousand Times more *terrible* than they are, insomuch that the Prospect and Apprehension is generally more *grievous* to us, than the Sense and Experience of them, and what we imagine in them, is far more than what

we feel. And thus we turn each *Whip* into a *Scorpion*, and swell our *Mole-hill* into a *Mountain* of Misery ; so that the greatest part of what we suffer, is generally of our own creating, because we suffer not only the *real Evils* which are in the Things themselves, but which are commonly more, the *fantastick* too which *our own Imagination* forms and affixes to them. So that would we but take Care to strip *Realities* from *Fantastick*, it would be impossible for those *Evils* which we feel or fear to give us half the Disturbance that they do ; and the only way for us to do this, is to take our Measures of these *outward Evils* from *Religion*, which will soon satisfy us that they are nothing near so *formidable* in themselves, as we imagine them. For as for Instance, what *mighty Matter* is there in the loss of these *outward Goods* which are all so *extrinsick* to our *Happiness*, which cannot help us in our *greatest Needs*, nor make us easie in their *fullest Enjoyment*, and which *Thousands* enjoy not, and yet are a Thousand Times more *happy* than those who possess them in the *greatest Abundance*? Again, what *great Evil* is it for a Man to be contemned, and reproached, and vilified? for as for these Things they are *Good* or *Evil* as we please to fancy them, and there is scarce any *other Venom* in them, than what *our own Imagination* doth

doth infuse. If we think them *great Evils*, they will be sure to vex and discompose us, which is the *greatest Injury* they can do us; but if we scorn and despise them, they are *impotent Things*, which like *Wild-fire*, do only crack and vanish into Air, but leave no *formidable Effects* behind them. To name no more, what *mighty Hurt* is there in *being persecuted for Righteousness sake*? Suppose I were banished from my Friends and *native Country*, do I not see Men every Day undertake a *voluntary Exile*, and banish themselves into the *remotest Parts of the World*, only to get an *Estate*, or to learn *Experience*, or satisfie a *Curiosity*? for all the difference between *one* and *t'other*, is only this, that the *one* is forced, and the *other* voluntary, and why the *one* should be worse than the *other*, there can be no *other Reason* assigned, but only this, that we imagin it so. Could we but cure our *erroneous Fancy*, such Banishment would be only a more *advantageous Travel*, since doubtless, he who travels to save his *Conscience* and *Innocence*, and secure his *Hopes of everlasting Bliss*, makes the best Voyage in the World. Suppose I should suffer a *close Imprisonment*, and be secluded from *human Conversation*; is it such a *deplorable Thing* for a Man to be kept within Doors, to be snatch'd out of the *Crowd and Hurry of the World*, and be

be forced to retire within himself, and converse with *God*, and *Heaven*, and his own *Thoughts*? Are not *these* Company enough to entertain our Solitudes, and to supply the Want of the Noise of the World, in which there is commonly so much of Discord and Impertinence? But then suppose the worst that you *can* suppose; that you should suffer a *t tormenting Death*, and be chased out of the World with the *severest* Instruments of *human Cruelty*. It is certain that e'er long you must have died whether you had suffer'd *Martyrdom* or no; only now you die a little sooner, and so anticipate your *eternal Happiness*. And if you had died a *natural Death*, perhaps the *T torment* might have been much greater; you might have languished much longer under the *Gout*, or *Stone*, or *Strangury*, than under the Hands of the Executioner, and endured the *same* Degree of *T torment*, without the *Comfort* of dying in a *brave Cause*, and being assured of an *immortal Recompence*. Thus *Religion* sets the *Evils* of this World in a true *Light*, and represents them to us in their own *natural Forms* and *Colours*, without any of that *terrible Pomp* in which our *Imagination* is so apt to dress and *disguise* them; it assures us that they are all design'd for our *good*, and are convertible into it, and if we take *Care* to make a *wise* and *pious Use* of

of them, we shall be the better for them for ever ; it certifies us that they can deprive us of no *Good*, but what e'er long will be insignificant to us ; and that they can do us no *Hurt*, but what e'er long we shall be insensible of for ever ; and by thus exposing these *Evils* naked to us, it shews us their Nakedness, and Impotence, and thereby deprives them of the Power they borrow of our *Fancies* to disturb our Tranquility and Peace.

4. Another Cause of Disquiet of Mind, is an effeminate Softness, and Delicacy of Temper, arising from our Neglect of exercising those *Virtues* which naturally tend to confirm and fortifie the Mind against troublesome and disquieting Accidents ; such as *Faith*, *Patience*, and *Self-denial*, *Submission* and *Resignation* to God, which when like so many *Guardian Angels* they pitch their Tents about the Soul, are an *invincible* Defence to her against the Strokes and Impressions of Misfortune, and without which, she is left altogether *naked* and *unguarded* amidst all the *disquieting* Accidents that surround her. For in the Absence of these *heavenly Graces*, a Man hath nothing wherewithal to resist any *Evil* that befalls him, but only the *insensible* Stupidity, and *brutal* Sturdiness of his Temper, which can never hold out long under any *pressing* Calamity ; and

and when once these are broke by the *repeated Strokes and Impressions of unfortunate Accidents*, the Man presently dissolves into Softness and Effeminacy ; for now the *natural Brawniness of Temper* being worn away like a Stone with the continual *Droppings of Rain*, his Mind will become so *tender, and sore, and uneasy*, that every *little Touch of Misfortune* will pain and distract him ; in which Case he can derive no Relief from his Reason, having all along disused himself to advise and consult with it ; and so every *Alarm of Danger from without*, presently raises a *Tumult within*, and puts his whole *Soul* into an uproar, in which his Mind is left naked of all Relief, and utterly abandoned of those *wise and brave Thoughts* which should guard and defend it. But now had he taken Care but to educate his Mind in the School of *Christianity*, that by instructing him in all those *manly Virtues* of *Patience and Temperance, Constancy and Resignation* to the Will of God, would have inspir'd him by Degrees with such an *invincible Stayedness and Firmness of Spirit*, as would have rendred his Peace and Tranquility impregnable against all the *Assaults of Misfortune*. And when all is done, these *Virtues* are the *best Protection* we have against the Power of those *calamitous Accidents* that surround us. For when by *Temperance* a

Man

Man hath weaned himself from the Pleasures of the Body, when by *Patience* he hath hardened himself against the Pains and Displeasures of it, when by *Constancy* to himself, he hath acquired a *continual* Presence of Mind, and ready Use of his Reason and Consideration, when by *frequent* Acts of *Resignation* to God he hath reduced himself to an Habit of embracing every Accident as a Token of Love, and bidding every Thing welcome that befalls him; when, I say, these *happy* Effects are produced in him, he is as safe and secure from the disquieting Power of these *evil* Accidents below, as if he he lived in the *uppermost* Regions of the Air, where he enjoys a *perpetual* Calm and Serenity, where he tramples upon Clouds, and is above all Storms, and with *cheerful* and *composed* Mind can sit securely, smiling at the *rolling* Thunder *below*, whilst it grumbles and bursts underneath his Feet. Thus will the *constant* Practice of these *excellent* Graces, so *steel* and *harden* our *tender* Minds, that those *Evils* will be able to make no Impression on *us*, which now do wound us to the Heart. For as the Light of the Sun, and Freshness of the Air which are apt to offend the *Sickly* and *Tender*, are not only tolerable but delightful to Men of *hale* and *vigorous* Constitutions; so many of the *little* Hardships which trouble and incommod the

the *Tender* and *Delicate*, are so far from disturbing *patient* and *temperate* Minds, that they rather refresh and divert them.

5. And lastly, Another Cause of Disquiet of Mind, is our misplacing of our *Happiness* in Things that are out of *our own* Power. For *Happiness* is the *great* Load-stone that attracts and governs all our Motions, the Mark of all our Aims and Intentions, and the End of all our *deliberate* Actions. Whilst therefore we place our *Happiness* in Things that are out of our Power, we must be governed by Things that are out of our Power, and while we are so, we can never be quiet. For the Things that are out of our Power, being all of them *casual* and *contingent*, such as *Honour*, and *Greatness*, and *Carnal-Pleasures*; we can never be secure of the Comfort and *Happiness* we place in them, and consequently, our *Happiness* and *Misery* must be as *casual* and *contingent* as the *Goods* and *Evils* are from whence they do arise. And whilst we are governed by such *casual* Things as these, we can never be *our own* Men, but must live in Subjection to a *forraign* Power, and be what the Things that govern us will have us; and so long as the Passions and Appetites that over-rule us, are over-ruled by the Chances and *Contingencies* without us, we must be as *various*, as *fickle*, and as *multiform* as they. Whilst there-

therefore we place our Happiness in these *uncertain* Enjoyments, it is impossible our Mind should ever be at rest, but like a Ship in a *tempestuous* Sea, must be perpetually tossed and driven *to and fro* by the *furious* Gulfs of our own Passions, which can never be *calm* and *sedate*, till we fix upon a Happiness that is *certain* and *Stable*: For as our *Desires* can never be satisfied till we are compleatly happy, so our *Fears* can never be composed till such time as we are secure of our Happiness. But so *empty* and *fickle* is all worldly *Good*, that we can never be either *happy* in it, or secure of it; for when we have what we did first desire, *that* only inflames our Thirst, and makes us gasp for more; and then the Tenure of all is so *insecure*, that the Accession of more doth only increase our Fear of losing what we have. So that our Mind must be perpetually grounded between these *Two restless* Millstones, the *Desire* of getting more, and the *Fear* of losing what we enjoy; and therefore seeing it is impossible for us to alter the Nature of these *outward* Goods, or to render them either more secure, or more satisfying, the only way for us to be truly *happy*, is to alter the Temper of our *own* Minds, to wean them from this World, and determin them to an Happiness that is more Solid and Substantial, and within *our own*

Dispo-

Disposal; and such a Happiness is that which *Christianity* proposes to us, an Happiness that depends upon our own *free* Acts, and grows out of the *Graces* and *Vertues* of our own Mind. For so that everlasting Heaven which the *Gospel* proposes to us is inseparably annexed to the *right* and *good* Use of our *natural* Liberty, and consequently is as much within our Power, as *our own* Resolutions, and *voluntary* Motions. Whilst therefore we are under the Government of this *Christian* Happiness, we are Masters of *our own* Fortunes, and do live independently on Chance and the Wills of Men, and it is within *our own* Power to be happy without asking leave of any but God and our selves. Now we are no longer *Tenants at Will* to the *little* Casualties and Accidents of the World, no longer liable to be turned out of our Happiness by *Storms*, or *Fires*, or *Invasions*, by the *Contingencies* of Providence, or the *Knaveries* and *Cruelties* of Men; no more exposed like *miserable* *Vagrants* to beg our Happiness from Door to Door, to creep, and cringe, and fawn to the Humors of an *Inconstant* World, to court its Smiles, or tremble at its Frowns. For if *Heaven* be the Happiness we depend on, there is nothing can deprives us of it, but our own *free* Acts, and it is as much in our Power not to be *miserable*, as not to be *wicked*.

wicked ; and our *Happiness* being all imbarke-  
ed in the same bottom with our *Piety* and  
*Vertue*, they must both of them run the  
same Fate, and either swim or sink together.  
If therefore we would be at *Peace* within our  
selves, we must put our selves under the  
Government of the Happiness of *Christians*,  
which is the only one that we can be sure  
of, there being no other within *our own* Pow-  
er and Disposal ; for till this is done, we are  
like Men in a Crowd, encompassed about  
with so many *cross renounting* Accidents as  
will never let us be at rest, but be perpe-  
tually shoving, and jostling us to and fro, and  
still as we get free from *one*, another will be  
pressing upon us, and that which thrusts on  
*this*, will still be thrust on by *another* with-  
out any Pause or Interruption ; and so our  
*miserable* Minds will be always hurried a-  
bout, and never want Causes of Disquiet.  
But when once we have fix'd upon *that*  
Happiness above, we shall be so much above  
these *little* Accidents *below*, and their Force  
will be so broken, before they can reach us,  
that we shall scarce be sensible of their *faint*  
Impressions, and so we shall pass on as qui-  
etly and undisturbedly through them, as we  
do noough throw those Crowds of *Motes* that  
are always dancing in the Air about us.

And so I have dispatched the first Thing I  
proposed, which was to shew that our *blessed*

*Lord* in order to his giving us *his Peace*, hath removed from us all Causes of Disquiet.

2. I now proceed to the Second, which is to shew, that he hath also taken Care to supply us with the most *effectual* Principles of *Peace*, and *Satisfaction* of Mind; and they are these following.

1. That by the Sacrifice of *himself*, he hath purged away our Guilts, and thereby given us the most *certain* Ground of *Peace of Conscience*.
2. That as he sacrificed himself for us, while he was upon *Earth*, so now he is in *Heaven*, he hath the Ordering and Disposal of every Thing that concerns or befalls us.
3. That he hath procured for us a *Futurity*, sufficiently happy to make us *infinite* amends for the *worst* Evils that can befall us here.
4. That he hath established this *happy* *Futurity* upon such Terms and Conditions, as are within the reach of *our own* *Power*.
5. That he hath taken Care in his *Absence* to provide for us *such* *Supports* as are *proportionable* to every *Burthen* he will lay upon us.
1. One Principle of *Peace* and *Satisfaction* of Mind wherewith our *Saviour* hath supplied us is this, that by the Sacrifice of *himself*,

self, he hath fully purged away our Guilts, and thereby given us the most *certain* Ground of Peace of Conscience: For he declared that he died in our Persons and stead, and that all those *miserable* Things he endured upon the Cross, were in lieu of that Punishment that was due to God for our sins; that the Blood he spilt *there*, was designed by him for the Price of our Redemption, and that the Life he laid down *there*, was in exchange for the *forfeited* Lives of our Souls. And to manifest God's Acceptance of it, as an *Equivalent* for our Punishment, he rose from the dead, and was actually discharged from the Prison of the Grave; by which he gave us an Acquittance under God's own Hand, purporting, that he had graciously accepted his Son's Death in lieu of our Punishment, and that if now we would heartily repent and amend all our *past* Guilts and Obligations to Punishment should, in Consideration thereof, be for ever dissolved. *Who then can lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect*, seeing it is *Christ* that hath died, and thereby tendered a *full Ransom* for us to *God*; *yea, rather, that is risen again*, and thereby certified us, that the Father of Mercies hath graciously accepted and allowed of it? So that if now we repent, we are as certain of our Pardon, as we are of the Death and Re-

surrection of our *Saviour*; which are such Facts, of which we have as plain Demonstration as the Nature of Things will bear. And having so *certain* a Ground of Peace of Conscience before us, what can be more *conducive* to the Ease and Satisfaction of our Minds? For a *quiet* Conscience is a Paradise within a Wilderness, whereinto a Man may retire when he can find nothing else to live upon, and live chearfully and merrily in despite of all Misfortunes, which, like Showers of Hail falling upon the Tiles of a *Musick-House*, are not able with all their Clattering and Noise, to disturb the *grateful* Harmony within. As therefore when all is *smooth* and *prosperous* without, a Man may shelter himself there from the Persecutions of his Conscience, so when all is *calm* and *serene* within, he may shelter himself there from the Persecutions of the World; but when *both* are belstomed, he hath no Refuge to fly to. And therefore that we may never be left utterly forsaken and abandoned, our *blessed Saviour* by washing away our Guilt in *his own* Blood, hath opened to us a *safe* Retreat within our own Breasts, *viz.* that of a *quiet* and *serene* Conscience, whereinto we may easily retire, and house our selves when we are persecuted with Storms and Tempest from without.

2. Another Principle of Peace and Satisfaction of Mind wherewith our *Saviour* hath furnished us, is this, that as he sacrificed himself for us when he was upon *Earth*, so now he is in *Heaven*, he hath the Ordering and Disposal of every Thing that concerns or befalls us. For now he is in *Heaven*, he intercedes for us in Virtue of that Sacrifice which he offered on Earth; and in the Virtue of *this* his *meritorious* Intercession, all Power is given him in *Heaven* and *Earth*. And indeed herein consists the *Royalty* of his *Priesthood*, *viz.* that by interceding for us as a *Priest*, and continuing so to do, he first obtained, and still continues vested with a *kingly* Power and Authority to bestow upon us all those *heavenly* Blessings he intercedes for. And hence all the Graces and Favours of God are in *Scripture* said to be derived to us *in*, or *by*, or *through* *Jesus Christ*; implying, that as it is from *God the Father* originally, that all our Mercies flow, so it is through *God the Son* immediately, that they are handed and derived to us; and that interceding for us as he doth, and always hath done, in Virtue of the *powerful* Oratory of his Sacrifice, he was first constituted, and is still continued the *royal* Distributer of all his Father's Graces and Favours to Mankind. So that now we are assured, there is nothing can happen to us

good or bad, but by his *merciful* Disposal; and can we think any thing *bad* that comes from his hand, who hath evidenced himself so much our Friend as to die for us? He who loved us to such a *stupendious* Degree, as to come down from *Heaven*, and assume our Natures, and therewith, all our *innocent* Infirmities and Miseries, and at last to suffer for us the most *grievous* and *infamous* Death; can he be *unkind* to us now he is our *King*, and hath the ordering and disposal of all our Affairs? Whenever therefore any *calamitous* Accident befalls us, and we begin to grieve or repine at it; let us remember that it is through his Permission or Appointment, who was so much our Friend while he was upon Earth, that he tended our Welfare far beyond his own Life; and if this doth not set our Hearts at rest, and reconcile us to the *worst* of Things that can happen to us, we are beyond the Reach and Influence of Reason and Discourse. For how can we suspect any thing to be *hurtful* to us, that is sent us down from our *merciful* Redeemer in *Heaven*, who when he was upon *Earth* never thought any thing, no not his own Life and *Blood* too much, or *too* dear for us. How grievous soever therefore any *present* Accident may appear to us, the Hand it came from, speaks and declares it to be a Token of Love, since to be sure nothing but Love can

can proceed from *that* Hand whose Heart alway loved us far above its own Ease, and Joy, and Life.

3. Another Principle of Peace and Satisfaction of Mind wherewith our Saviour hath supplyed us is this, that he hath procured for us a *Futurity* sufficient to make us *infinite* Amends for the *worst* of *Evils* that can befall us here; for he hath not only purchased for us *Life* and *Immortality* at the Price of his Blood, but hath also clearly discovered and brought it to light by his *Gospel*, the *joyous* Prospect of which is abundantly sufficient to support our Spirits under the most *direful* Accidents. For now when any *melancholy* Apprehensions begin to invade my Mind, this *blessed* Theme furnishes me with such a *mighty* Force of *joyous* Considerations as are abundantly sufficient to dispel and scatter them, and cause them to fly away like the Morning Milts before the *rising* Sun. Hold out, O my *Faith* and *Patience*, it is but a very *little* while that I have to suffer: This *woful* Dream that now lies hovering over my *Imagination* will vanish as soon as I awake in *Eternity*, and be as if it had never been at all. There all these *sad* Remembrances shall in one Moment be for ever lost, and swallowed up in one *continued everlasting* Joy; there I shall unload my self at once

of all my *present* Sighs and Griefs, and in their room take up *eternal* Songs of Praise and Hallelujahs; there I shall be placed far above all these Clouds and Storms in a *calm* and *quiet* Region, where there is nothing but *Light* and *Harmony*, nothing but *Peace*, and *Joy*, and *Love*; from thence I shall e'er long look down upon this *dark* *unquiet* *Atmosphere*, and remember with Joy all the *foul* *tempestuous* Weather I here endured, and have now surmounted, and the *glad* Remembrance of what is past will then serve only as a *Foil* or *Shadow* to set *off* that *blessed* State of Things, and render it more charming and illustrious. Why then art thou cast down, O my Soul, under the Sense of these *short-liv'd* *transitory* Evils of which within these very *few* Moments thou shalt be sure to take leave for ever? Tho' this Night be *dark* it is but *short*, and then will follow an *everlasting* Day. Tho' thy Voyage be *foul*, it is not *long*; 'tis only a *short* *days* *Sail* to a *blessed* Eternity, from whose *happy* Shores thou wilt a little while hence be looking back upon this *boisterous* Sea, and blessing those *angry* Storms and Waves that drove and hastned thee to that *happy* Port; where every Moments Injoyment will be sufficient to recompense thee a *thousand-fold* for all the Hardships under which thou art now suffering and complain-

ing

ing. Such Thoughts as these that *blessed* Futurity our *Saviour* hath purchased for us do naturally suggest to our Minds, which mingling with the *utmost* Griefs and Anxieties that any *Evil* from *without* can raise *within* us are abundantly sufficient to compose and calm them, and to create a *happy* Serenity in our own Breast, while all *without* us is *stormy* and *tempestuous*. For what *outward* Evil is there weighty enough to sink a Mind, that hath the hope of an *everlasting* *Heaven* to support it?

4. Another Principle of Peace and Satisfaction of Mind wherewith our *Saviour* hath supplyed us is this, that he hath established this *happy* Futurity upon such Terms and Conditions as are within the Reach of *our own* Power; that is, upon *Faith in Christ*, and *Repentance from dead Works*; which tho' in this *degenerate* State of our *Nature* it be not immediately in our Power to perform, yet mediately it is by those *Helps* and *Assistances* which *God* hath promised to us, and inseparably annexed to our making a *good* Use of our own *natural* Power. For since *God* by his own *free* Promise hath entailed the *Assistances* of his *Grace* upon our *honest* *Endeavour*, his *Grace* is as much at our *devotion* as our own *Faculties*, and it is as much in our Power to perform what we can-not without his *Grace*, as it is to perform what

what we can; and therefore seeing by his Assistance we can perform the Conditions of *eternal Life*, it is in our Power to perform them, because it is no less within our Power to oblige him to assist us than it is to oblige our selves to exert *our own Power and Endeavours*; the Conditions of our Happiness being through the Grace of God within our own Power, our Happiness is so too; which if duly considered is a *mighty Support* under all Afflictions from without. For why should we grieve that it is in the Power of Men and a thousand *adverse Accidents* to rob us of our *Ease* and our *Wealth*, our *Liberty* and *Reputation*? God be praised our *main Happiness* consists not in these Things, but in *Heaven*; there lies the Treasure of of our Hearts, and the Hope of our Lives, of which there is none but our selves can disappoint us. If we will be happy in the *eternal Possession* of that *inexhaustable Mine of Bliss*, we may, and all the Hardships and Inconveniencies we may endure on the Way to it are neither able to obstruct our Passage, nor hinder our *safe Arrival*; unless by a *base Surrender* to them we betray our selves. So that now we may give a *bold Defiance* to all the *combining Malice* of Men and Devils, and tell them that we will be *happy*, eternally *happy* in despite of the worst they can do to us, seeing

ing the matter wholly depends upon our own Courage and Resolution backt and assisted by the *never-failing Grace of God*. There is nothing that Men or Misfortune can deprive me of but I can live without, and maintain my self in a *happy and glorious Post for ever*. Why then should I grieve to see my Drugs flung over-board, which within a few Moments hence will be of no Use or Value to ~~me~~, so long as it is in my Power to save all my *precious and immortal Fraight*; and thereby to secure my self of a most *happy and prosperous Voyage*; Whenever therefore we are threatned with *sad Contingencies*, or with the Power or Malice of Men, we have this Answer ready to return to them; God be praised, our *main Happiness depends not upon you*; we can, if we will, go to *Heaven* in despight of you, and when once we are *there* we shall be far beyond your Reach, and then these *light Afflictions* which you now lay upon us, and *which are but for a moment*, will be found unworthy to be compared with that *eternal Glory* which shall be revealed to us. Which Consideration closely applied, and deeply imprinted on our Minds, is of *sufficient* Virtue to ease and relieve us under the most *calamitous Circumstances*; for while our *main Chance and Interest* is safe, all is well with us, and then we are

are secure none can prejudice us but our selves.

5. And lastly, another Principle of Peace and Satisfaction of Mind wherewith our *Saviour* hath supplyed us is this, that he hath taken Care, during his Absence from us, to provide for us *such* Supports as are proportionable to every Burthen he will lay upon us. For so he tells his *Disciples*, when he was departing from them, that it was *expedient* for them that he should *go away*, because until he went, according to the *divine* *Oeconomy*, the *Comforter* was not to come; *but when I depart*, saith he, *I will send him unto you*, Jo. 16. 7. And accordingly when he departed he sent down his *holy Spirit* to represent himself and act as his *Viceroy* in his *heavenly* Kingdom, and to do all that for us which he himself would have done had he continued personally present with us. So that tho' now he is a great way off from us in Person, yet by his *Spirit* he is still *present* with us; *present* with all that *render* Affection, and with all those *yearning* Bowels of Compassion that he express'd towards us while he was upon Earth. And whereas had he continued among us in Person he could have been *present* with us only at such *determinate* Places and Distances, he is now *present* with us where-ever we are, in every Place, and at every

every Distance by his *immense* Spirit, which like an *Omnipresent Soul* being diffused through all his *Mystical Body* gives Life and Motion to every Part and Particle of it. And having thus taken Care to supply his *personal* Absence from us with this *divine Presence*, which is every way co-extended to the *utmost* Diffusion of his *Church*, we may depend upon it that where-ever or in what Circumstances soever we are, he is by us, and with us, beholding all our Needs with a *compassionate* Heart, and ready to extend to us whatever Aids and Supports we stand in need of. How then can we droop in his *blessed* Presence? How can our Hearts sink while he stands by us? What *Evil* is there can scare or distract our Minds, whilst we consider that the *Almighty Spirit* of the *blessed Jesus* our Friend is always and every where with us, ready bent to stretch forth his *helping Hand* to support us under every Oppression? Alas! I am afraid *this* Burthen will at length grow *too* heavy for me, that my Strength and Courage will at last be forced to yield, and sink underneath it. Well, tho' you fear *your own* Strength, yet sure you cannot doubt the Strength and Power of the *Spirit of God*, and his Strength is yours to all *necessary* Purposes as much as it is his own; and therefore unless you apprehend your Burthen to be *too* heavy for *his* Power

Power as well as yours, you have no Reason to dread that you shall sink underneath the Weight of it. You are afraid lest you should be called forth to suffer for *Righteousness sake*, and lest under the Rage and Violence of Persecution your *Faith* and *Constancy* should shrink and yield. Why consider with your selves, are there not Thou-sands of *Christians* that have suffered before you, suffered as *terrible* Things as you can possibly dread, and this not only with *Patience* and *Constancy*, but with *Joy* and *Triumph*? Why then should you suspect that *blessed* Spirit which supported them, to be less able or willing to bear up you? He who hath so often enabled so many *tender* *Virgins*, *delicate* *Matrons*, *infirm* and *aged* *Bishops* to sing in the midst of flames, to smile upon *Racks*, to triumph upon *Wheels* and *Catasta's*; and in short, to endure such *long* and *dolorous* *Martyrdoms*, as manytimes they did, when their *Tormentors* took their *Turns* from *Morning* to *Night*, and pleyed them with all *Kinds* of *Cruelties* till many times they were forced to give over, and confess that they had not *Heart* enough to inflict the *Tortures* which those poor *Sufferers* had *Courage* enough to endure: He, I say, who hath thus far enabled *them*, can he not as well enable *you*? Is his *Arm* shortened that he cannot save, or his *Ear* grown heavy

heavy that he cannot hear you as well as them? Consider then, you have the same Right that they had by the same *never-failing* Promise to this his enabling Power, which by so many *glorious* Instances hath demonstrated it self sufficient to support you under the *heaviest* Oppressions; and therefore you have all the reason in the world to expect the same Aids and Supports from it if ever you should be reduced to the same Extremities. Our great Care therefore ought to be that we do not desert our *Saviour*, either by *wilful* Apostacy from his Faith, or Disobedience to his Laws; for so long as we continue faithful to him he cannot leave and desert us; our main Concern ought to be that we do *our* Part, and not that he doth *his*; for he cannot fail, tho' we may. If we prove *true* to him we may assuredly depend upon it that he will prove *true* to us, and not leave us destitute of any Help or Support that in any Condition is *necessary* for us. If therefore to serve the wise and *holy* Ends of his Providence he should at any time think it meet to call us to suffer, we may set our Hearts at rest upon *this* Assurance, that so long as we take Care to maintain our Integrity he must take Care to maintain our Strength, and not permit us to sink under any Burthen he lays upon us for want of any degree of Comfort and

Support

Support that our State and Condition requires. Which Consideration duly applied cannot fail of giving a great deal of Ease to our *anxious* and *desponding* Minds.

Having thus shewn at large what *abundant* Provision our *Saviour* hath made for the Peace and Satisfaction of our Minds, I shall conclude all in a very few Words. Our *blessed Saviour* hath long since told us that in *this* World we shall have Trouble, but that in him we shall have *Peace*; which, tho' it were more eminently true in those *early* Days of Suffering and Persecution, doth yet hold most certainly true not only in Times of *Peace*, but even in the most *prosperous* Circumstances of *humane Life*. For we cannot but know that we are dependent upon *Chance*; we cannot but know that it is in the Power of *ten thousand* *Contingencies* to distract us, and this in despite of us will create a *great* many *anxious* Thoughts, and vex us with *melancholy* Apprehensions of our *Futurity*: And tho' at present we may hush them with *Jollity* and *Mirth*, upon the *next* Reflection they will be sure to awake again, and to revenge themselves upon us for those Moments of Ease we ravished from them; and then when *any* *evil* *Accident* threatens or approaches us we can give our selves no *certain* Assurance of escaping it. For when we have done all

that

that lies within the Compass of our *Wisdom* and *Power*, there may a thousand Crosses arise in our way which it is impossible for us either to foresee or prevent, and turn our most *promising* Designs upon our selves, and hasten the *Evil* upon us by those very Means which we chuse to prevent it; the Sense of which must necessarily cause many a *stinging* Thought to swarm about our Minds, and to vex and distract us in our *deepest* Security. Thus in our *best* Estate we are *poor* and *indigent* Creatures, fain to seek abroad, and to go a *begging* for our *Happiness* from Door to Door; to depend upon Chance, and live *insecure* of every thing we either possess, or desire, or hope for. And considering how prone we are to be alarmed with the Prospect of a *sad* *Futurity*, and to magnify *distant* *Evils* in our own Apprehensions, and to aggravate *present* ones by our Impatience and Despair; and in a word, to pall our *best* Enjoyments by expecting more from them than their Nature will afford; considering these Things, I say, it is the *greatest* *Nonsense* in the *World* for Men to expect *Peace* and *Satisfaction* of Mind from any thing here below. And if we are thus liable to Disturbance in our *best* Estate, alas, what are we in our *worst*! When Calamities come rolling upon us like the Waves of the Sea upon the back of one *another*, and

we have no Harbour in View to put in at. In this ~~rest~~ Tumult of things therefore whither shall we beake our selves for Tranquillity and Peace? If we go into the World, every thing in it tells us it is not in ~~me~~ us. If we go out of the World into Deserte and Solitudes, the Strings we shall either find there or carry thither with us will soon convince us that it is not in *them*. Where then can we hope to find Peace, but only in ~~Jesus~~ the Prince of Peace? To him therefore let us go with an humble Faith and obedient Will, with a resolved Mind to adhere to his Truth, and submit to his Laws, and wholly to resign our selves to his Conduct and Government. And if in him you do not find all that *Peace and Satisfaction* you have hitherto sought in vain, never give Credit to any thing that is sacred more. I am sure it is to be found in *him* if we wisely, and honestely, and industriously seek it. Thousands have found it in *him*, who could find it nowhere else; and having found it have enjoyed themselves all their Days after, in sweet Content and Peace, and at length have breathed out their Souls to him in Praises for the happy Discovery. And therefore if it be not our own fault we may soon add our selves to this blessed Number, by devoting our selves to *him* as they did, and surrendering our Lives and Interests to his Government.

verment and Disposal. And when once we have performed this with a sincere and *rejoicing* Intention, we shall by degrees perceive the Tempests within us quieted and abated, and our *stormy* Minds clearing up into an *happy* Serenity; and still as we more and more subdue our Wills and Affections to him we shall feel and experience our selves more and more at Ease, until at length we shall arrive to such a settled Peace and Tranquillity of Soul as that it will be beynd the Power of any outward Concern to disturb us. And now our Mind will be a Paradise to it self, a Paradise wherein it will be able to live *contented* and *happy*, and to breath calm and gentle Thoughts how tempestuous soever its Condition is without. And finding all composed and quiet within, we shall lead a Life far more *easy*, and *even*, and *consistent* than ever; for now we shall no longer reserve our selves to follow Fortune and the Turns of outward Affairs, to comply with all the Mutabilities of the Wind, and still to transform our selves into *new* Shapes as we are running through the *still-changing* Fashions of the World. Now we shall no longer perplex and incangle our selves by *Knavish* Tricks and *fordid* Compliances, by being forced still to study how to act a *new* Part, and to put on a *new* Garb of Humour and Conversation upon every *new* occasion.

new Alteration of Affairs; but our Way will lie even, easy, and direct before us, and whatsoever happens to us from without, whether it rains or shines, proves calm or tempestuous, the inward Peace and Satisfaction we shall find in following Jesus by our firm Adherence to his Truth, and Obedience to his Laws, will carry us safely thro' all Events, and render us far more happy even in our persecuted sincerity than we can reasonably suppose to be in the most prosperous Hypocrite. Wherefore if ever you intend to beat Rest within, and to enjoy yourselves in Peace and Tranquility; go to <sup>the</sup> blessed Prince and Author of Peace. Take with you Words and say, O blessed Jesus, hitherto we confess other Lords have had Dominion over us, such as Pride and Ambition, Lust and Avarice; and these have all proved unmerciful Tyrants to us, they have continually harassed and oppressed our Minds; they have laid waste all our Peace, stripp'd and plundered us of our Self-enjoyment, and almost worn out our Lives in perpetual Troubles and Anxieties. Wherefore now at last we return unto thee weary and heavy laden, not only with Guiles but Vexations, resolving for the future that thee alone we will serve. O do not reject us thy oppressed and miserable Creatures, who are driven unto thee for Refuge from those cruel Task-masters that have hitherto reigned over us; but

but permit us to spend the Remainder of our Days under thy happy Government. We know thy yoke is easy, and thy Burthen light; and therefore suffer us now at last, we beseech thee, to come unto thee that in thee we may find rest for our Souls, who have sought it in vain in every Thing but thee. And having thus surrendered up our selves to him, let us by our constant Perseverance in Well-doing endeavour to subdue our selves more and more to his Will in this full Assurance that from our hearty and punctual Conformity thereunto, we shall reap not only Peace and Tranquility here, but also immortal Glory and Happiness hereafter: Which we beseech thee to grant us all of thy infinite Mercy, O blessed Jesus; to whom with thy great Father and eternal Spirit be ascribed of us and all the World all Honour and Glory and Praise from this time forth and for evermore.

Amen.

*A double-minded Man is unstable in all his Ways.*

**B**Y a double-minded Man here we are to understand (as is plain from the context) an insincere Man, one who pretends to Religion, and hath a good Inclination towards it, but is not arrived to a firm and prevailing Resolution of adhering to it, maugre all Temptations to the contrary; that bears some faint and ineffectual Regard to the Rules of his Duty and the Dictates of his Conscience, but not such as hath the Superiority over him, and doth command and govern his Life and Conversation; not such as hath that prevailing Influence upon him, as to hinder him from being ordinarily counter-twayed by his Appetites, or Passions, or secular Interests to the Commission of unlawful and irregular Actions. So that the single-minded Man is one who hath no other Mind, no other prevailing Purpose and Resolution, but to adhere to God in the Profession and Practice of true Religion, and upon every Emergency, is ready fix'd to perform what God demands of him by the Voice of Revelation and right Reason; and in a Word, that lives

lives under no other commanding Principle but this, *I will always do what God will have me*: and so on the contrary, the double-minded Man is one that fluctuates between Two Minds and Wills, a Will for God, and a Will for the World; and is governed sometimes by one, and sometimes by another, but is never true or constant to either. In short, he is one who being yet unsubdued to the commanding Power and Influence of Religion, hath no fix'd, no determined Mind or Resolution; but is not only of several Minds upon several Occasions, but also of contrary Minds upon contrary Occasions. For his Heart is so divided between his God and his Interest, his Duty and his Lust, that like a Needle between Two Load-Stones he is always wavering *too and again*, and pointing alternately to both, but is never fix'd to either. And of this Man the Apostle tells us, *That he is unstable in all his Ways*. Where by *Ways* according to the Hebrew *Pharæology*, he means Actions; he is unstable in all his Actions, that is, he always acts with an *anxious, doubtful, and misgiving Mind*; he knows not where to find himself, nor many times which way to turn himself: he leads a very *uncertain, insecure, and unquiet Life*, being all along perplexed and entangled in the whole Course of his

Actions. The Words thus explained, may be resolved into this Proposition;

That whilst Mens Minds are divided between God and their Lusts, and are not entirely subdued to his Will; they must necessarily lead very anxious, insecure, unhappy Lives: That till such time as we act from an *imire* Submission of our Souls to God, we can never act steadily and securely, but must be always fluctuating in great Anxiety and Uncertainty.

The Wise Man tells us, that, *He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely*, Prov. xvi. 9. He goes on in a direct, secure, and even Course of Action, wherein there is no Perplexity, or intanglement; whereas the Life of a double-minded Hypocrite whose Heart is divided between God and the World, is a perpetual Maze and Labyrinth, wherein the farther he goes, the more he is lost and confounded. And this will evidently appear upon the following Considerations.

1. That he acts upon no fixed or certain Principles.

2. That the Way and Course of his Actions is all obscure and intricate.

3. That he is always fain to live in a Disguise, and is therein insecure of Concealment.

4. That

vers. 4. That he is always at odds with himself, and in perpetual Variance with his own Reason.

vers. 5. That he is at a miserable Uncertainty still as to the present Events and Issues of his own Actions.

vers. 6. That he hath a most dismal Prospect before him of the final Issue, and Event of all.

vers. 7. The double-minded Man acts upon no fixed or certain Principles. For the Principles he proceeds upon are such as have no Foundation in the Nature of Things, but, like Castles in the Air, are built upon mere Dreams and Delusions, which whenever his Reason awakes, will sink and disappear. For either he liveth upon no Principles at all, but acts like the Beasts that perish, upon blind Instincts, and the unaccountable Impulses of his ~~humble~~ Soul; or upon such Principles as these, that there is no such Being in the World as an *eternal, and invisible, almighty Power*; or that if there be, he lives retired from us, and takes no Notice of what we do; or that if he doth, 'tis as an *unconcern'd Spectator* to whom it is purely indifferent whether we do *Good* or *Evil*; or that if he be at all pleased with our *good* Deeds, and displeased with our *bad*, yet it is not to any such Degree, as to intail any *future Rewards* upon

on the one, or Punishments on the other; or that if there be any such Rewards and Punishments prepared by him, they are so slight and *inconsiderable*, that the Loss of the one, and Sufferance of the other, are abundantly compensated by the present Pleasure of a sinful Life; or in fine, that if neither the one nor the other prove true, yet we may securely enjoy these Pleasures while we are able, and by repenting at last when we are old or dying, and are able to enjoy them no longer, may intitle our selves to *those* Rewards, whatsoever they are, and secure our selves from *those* Punishments. This is the Chain of Principles, upon which *bad* Men live and act, if they act upon any at all, and which are all of them grounded upon such *doubtful* Presumptions, such *thin* Pretences, and *unsatisfactory* Reasonings, as no Man in his Wits can ever be thoroughly secure of. For besides that they contradict the *best* and *wisest* Part of the World, the *current* Sense of *humane* Nature, and the *common* Consent of all Mankind, which are such Prejudices against them, as must necessarily render them very doubtful at least; besides all this, I say, they have so *strong* a Current of Evidence against them, and are over-powered with such a Force of Arguments from all the Quarters of Reason and Reli-

Religion, and the contrary Principles are so much more agreeable to all the Appearances of Things, to the sacred Oracles, to human Society, and to the very Frame of human Nature; and in a Word, have every way to *raise* an Over-weight of Reason on their side, that it is impossible for any Man in a cold Mind to be confident that they are true, how much soever it may be his Interest to wish them so. So that whereas the *sincere and upright* Man living, as he doth, upon well-tried Principles that for their Truth have been always found most *agreeable to* Reason, and for their Usefulness always *approved* by *constant Experience*, treads firmly and boldly, being *secure* of the Ground he goes upon; the *double-minded Hypocrite*, being all along uncertain of the Grounds of his Action, walks like a *benighted Traveller* in a *dangerous Road*, where he is fain to feel out his way, and to tread tenderly, and cautiously, lest his next step should be into a *Bogg* or a *Precipice*. And so long as he is *insecure* of the Principles upon which he acts, he can never be *secure* that he acts *safely*. He knows that if the Principles he goes upon prove *false*, he is *undone*, and whether they will prove so or no, he is at best *uncertain*; and so through the whole Course of his *Sin and Life*, he walks with an

an anxious and misgiving Mind, and goes trembling on between Hope and Fear to the final Issue and Event, which for all he knows may prove such as will put an end to all his Hopes for ever. For ~~make~~ all his Confidence, he cannot be sure but that when he dies, he may find all the Principles he acts on, baffled by a woful Experience; he may then feel that there is a God to whom Vengeance belongs, and an ~~eternal~~ Life of Rewards and Punishments: and if he should, how will it blank and amaze him, to find himself, instead of being reduced to an insensible Substance, landed on a strange inhospitable Shore, inhabited with ghastly Furies, and miserable Ghosts, and shut up with them by a vast surrounding Gulph in everlasting Horror and Despair, and therefore seeing he can have no Security, but that such may be the *fata!* Close of his sinful Life, he must, when ever he coolly reflects, be miserably anxious, and uneasy, and expect the mighty Event with Dread, and dire Abodings.

2. The Way and Course of a *double-minded* Man's Actions is all obscure and intricate. For whereas the Course of an honest, upright Man, is for the main of it chalked out to his hands both by divine Revelation, and the natural and eternal Reasons of Things, and

nd that so plainly, and clearly, that as soon as he opens his Eyes, he may easily discern it without any great Reach of Wit, or Depth of Judgment; the Rule of his Actions being *open* and *direct*, without any dark Subtilties, or *intricate* Windings and Turnings; the *false pretending Hypocrite* lives in a Maze, wherein having no *certain* Rule to go by, he is very often at a loss which way to direct himself. For having forsaken the plain Paths which God hath described to him, he is put upon inventing a Way for himself, of studying *his own* Steps, and groping to his End through a *Labyrinth* of *popular* Errors and Mistakes; in which he is oftentimes so lost and bewildered, that he knows neither where he is, nor whether to go next; and sometimes the Way that he takes lies quite *crofs* to his Ends, and sometimes leads him about in such a *wide* Compass, that by that time he arrives at them, they are not worth his Travel; and even when he thinks himself *most* in the right, and goes on with the *fuller* Assurance, Time and Chance many times cast up so many Difficulties and perplexing Intercurrences in his Way, as to puzzle all his Wit and Contrivance how to break through them. Thus when men leave God's Way which is a *plain*, a *sure*, and *infallible* one, and commit themselves

selves to the Conduct of their own *blind* Wills and *short-sighted* Reason; they forsake the Light of the Sun to follow a *Night* fire, which instead of conducting them in the *plain* and *direct* Way, carries them at *random* about in the Dark, leads them *higher* and *shitter*, *backwards* and *forwards*, over Hedges and Ditches, through Breaks and Bogs, till they are lost and *maz'd* in their *own* Wandrings. While they walk in God's Way, they have God's *Wisdom* for their Guide, which cannot mislead them; there they have nothing to do, but to follow the *easy* Directions of an *infallible* Mind, to receive his Commands, and to obey them; there they are free from all the Trouble of forming *new* Resolutions, and inventing *new* Measures of Action upon *new* Emergencies; there they see their way plainly described to them, and are resolved once for all to pursue it through all Events, without any further Pause or Deliberation, being fully satisfied in themselves, that it is much *sifer* for them to follow God's Will, which acts from *infinite* Goodness, by *infinite* Wisdom, with *infinite* Power, than to follow *their* own which they know by *no* *far* Experience is so liable to be impoted upon by *false* Shews and Appearances, and to mistake *Poyson* for *Physick*, and *Evil* for *Good*. Thus while

while they are in God's Way, they find all things direct, and plain, and easy to them, but when they divert into their own, there they have nothing to guide them but a ruin-foolish Mind that is easily trick'd and imposed upon, and a blind Appetite that is conducted by a roving Imagination; there they are fain to live by their Wits, upon extem-porary Shifts and Evasions, and still to invent new Ways upon new Occasions, and to wander about in in a mysterious Labyrinth of little Tricks and Contrivances, which instead of extricating them out of the Difficulties of Life, do commonly but more and more perplex and intangle them. And hence, as the Path of the Just is in Scripture described to be *as the shining Light*, Prov. 4. 18. to have nothing froward or perverse in them, and to be plain to him that understandeth, Prov. 8. 8, 9. and to be an even Place, where none of his Steps shall slide, Psal. 96. 12. compar'd with 37. 31. So on the other side the Paths of the Wicked are said to be dark and crooked, Prov. 2. 13, 15. and to be uneven and slippery, Jer. 23. 12. And in such a way as this, how is it possible for a Man to walk firmly and stably? The double-minded Man is always fain to live in a Disguise, and is therein very in-secure, of Concealment; and this also ren-ders

ders him *unstable in all his Ways*: Tho' consider what a *false and ill-natur'd* World we live in, it is many times an *honorable and necessary* Prudence for a Man to reserve his Mind, and not proclaim even his *fair* Intentions in every ones Ear with whom he converses. But for a Man to live in a *constant Disguise*, and always look one Way, and row another, to counterfeit and dissemble, and mask his *real* Intentions with *contrary Appearances*, is a very *unfair* Way of living; for there is twice the Difficulty in every Thing that he aims and drives at, as there is in an *honest* and *above-board* Procedure. Here *honest* Ends are pursued by *direct* Means, without need of any Colour or Artifice; whereas, there commonly more Art is required to justify the Means, than to manage them; and to dissemble the Ends, than to obtain them. For whilst the Ends a Man proposes be *foul* and *dishonest*, he must in his own Defence pretend quite contrary to *his own* Intentions; and to form and manage his Pretensions so artificially, as to conceal his *bad* Intentions under them, till they are executed, is commonly the *greatest* Difficulty in the Execution of them. For tho' Men may be *foolish* enough, yet they are not *good-natur'd* enough to be always imposed upon by *fair* Pretences; their very

ill Nature makes them jealous and suspicio-  
ous, and their Jealousie and Suspicion  
makes them prying and inquisitive. And  
what a deal of Art must it require for a  
Man to conceal himself, and carry on his  
Aims with any *plausible* Colour, when he  
hath so many *jealous* and *inquisitive* Eyes upon  
him? And then for a Man to dissemble, is  
an *omission* to himself, 'tis to act against the  
Grain of *his own* Nature by making an *out-  
ward* Shew and Appearance of that which  
he *inwardly* hates. For while a Man pre-  
tends to be *this* which he is not, he must  
seem in his Actions to be that *which* he is  
most averse to, and all the while he doth  
so, he thwarteth himself, and acts directly  
contrary to his own Inclinations. If his  
wicked Aims did not force him to hide him-  
self, while he is making a *formal* Shew of  
Mortification, he would much rather be la-  
tisiting his *hungry* Lusts; while he is hang-  
ing down his Head like a Buleruth to glu-  
gish his *Pride* and *Ambition*, he would much  
rather be strutting, insulting, and domineer-  
ing; while he is giving his *Aims* to be seen of  
Men, he would much rather be grinding and  
oppressing the Poor; and whilst in order to  
harden his *Widowes* houses he is making  
long *Prayers*, he would much rather be glur-  
ting his *Avarice* with the Spoil. So that all

the while he pretends to be the *contrary* to what he is, he must practise the *contrary* to what he is inclined, and while he doth so, he offers a *perpetual* Force and Violence to himself. Now what *uneasie* Way of living must this be, for a Man to be always studying how to conceal himself, and to be forced to live in a Disguise that he *hates*? and yet this is the Life of the *double-minded* Man that *trains* between God and the World. And then that which adds to his *Uneasiness* is, that after all he can never be *secure* of his Disguise; he knows that if he should be discovered through it, it would quite *spoil* his Game, and instead of setting a *Gloss* upon his *foul* Intentions, it would only render them more *ugly* and *odious*; there being nothing can render *Wickedness* more ugly than it is, but the *Discovery* and *Appearance* of it through the *Vail* of *Sanctity*. So that if ever his *wicked* Intentions should happen to be discovered, they will be sure to fare the worse for their being disguised, and 'tis a Thousand to One, but *first* or *last* some *Accident* or *other* detects and unmasks them, and then they are for ever *baffled* and *disappointed*. So that this *double-minded* Hypocrite walks like a *Malefactor* in a *Vizard*, afraid of every one that looks *wisly* upon him, jealous of being *betray'd* even by his

own Voice, or Shape, or Deportment, full of anxious Thoughts, left by some Accident or other his Wizard should drop off and discover him; being conscious to him self, that if ever the *Mystery* of his Iniquity should be unfolded, and what he hath acted *behind* the *Curtain* should be brought to Light, he shall not only lose all the Credit and Advantage of the *Part* he hath hitherto ~~so~~ artificially acted, but also be his'd off the Stage with Scorn and Infamy. And how then is it possible for a Man to walk steadily under such *slippery* Circumstances, when he dances upon a Rope as it were, where if he trips he falls, and if he falls he is ruined.

4. He is always at odds with himself, and in *perpetual* Variance with *his own* Reason. There is a Sense in Mens Souls that doth as naturally distinguish between *Good* and *Evil*, as their Tast doth between *bitter* and *sweet*, and is equally pleased or offended by them. Whilst therefore *this* Sense remains alive within us, and in any Degree *quick* and *perceptive*, every Touch and Impression of *Evil* will *more* or *less* pain and aggrieve it, and till with the *customary* Impressions of *Evil*, a Man hath fear'd and stupifi'd his Sense of it, he will never be able to sin in quiet for it, but upon evry *cold* Reflection on *his own* ill Courses, will feel a sensible

Remorse and Compunction. And this is inevitable to the double-minded Man, who divides himself between God and his Lusts; for he retains so much of God, as will always keep his Sense of Good and Evil alive, and together with it, he retains so much of his Lusts, as will always disturb and offend it: so that at once he takes *effectual Care* both to preserve his Sense of *Evil* quick and vigorous, and to be perpetually vexing it with the *painful Impressions* of *Evil*; and so treats himself, as heretofore the Tormentor did the suffering *Martyrs*, who gave them *Cordials* to keep them alive, only to enable them to sustain more *Torments*. If he would wholly abandon *God* he might thereby extinguish his Sense of *Evil*; or if he would wholly abandon his Lusts, he might thereby prevent his sensation of *Evil*; but while he retains *both*, he retains both *Sense* for his *Torment*, and *Torment* for his *Sense*, and at once cherishes the *Evil* that afflicts his *Sense*, and preserves his *Sense* alive to endure the *Affliction*. There are no *Two Things* in the *World* can less endure one another in the same *Breast* than a *sensible Conscience* and a *wicked Will*, which like *Fire* and *Water* will be continually struggling till either the *one* is quenched, or the *other* evaporated. The *Will* will not let the *Conscience*

science be quiet, nor the Conscience the Will ; and so those *Two Commanding Powers* of our Souls will live in *perpetual Variance*, and admit of no *other* Intercourse but *mutual Violences* and *Outrages*, till either the *one* is extinguished, or the *other* subdued. Whilst therefore a Man's Mind is *double* and *divided*, his Soul is in a State of War, there being *Two irreconcilable Parties* perpetually struggling within his Breast ; a Law in his *Mind* fighting against the Law in his *Members*, his *Reason* against his *Appetite*, his *Conscience* against his *Will* ; so that he can take neither Part without doing Violence to himself. If he sides with his *Conscience*, he *outrages* his *Will*, if he sides with his *Will* he *forces* his *Conscience* ; If he take part with his *Appetite*, he makes War with his *Reason* ; if he complies with his *Reason*, he bids defiance to his *Appetite*. Thus which way soever he determines himself, he is sure to determine against *one* Part of himself ; and it can never be otherwise till *one* of these *adverse* Parts of himself are subdued, and this *double* Mind is reduced to a *single* one. When he hath but *one* Mind, whether it be a *bad* or a *bad* one, he will be at Peace and Unity with himself ; but before he can have *one good* Mind, he must form a *good* Resolution, and follow it till he hath intirely  
sub-

subdued his Will and Appetite to his Reason and Conscience, and then the *intestine* War will conclude in a *happy* Peace; and so on the contrary, before he can have one *bad* Mind, he must abandon himself to all *Ungodliness* and *worldly Lusts*, and continually drink *in* Iniquity as the Horse drinks *in* Water, till he hath intoxicated his Reason with it, and stupified his Conscience; and then the *intestine* Struggle will conclude in a *lethargick* Quiet and Insensibility; But to arrive at *this*, is far more difficult than it is to acquire the *former*; for while a Man contends with his Reason and Conscience, he contends with his *original* Nature, and to vanquish *that*, is far more difficult than to subdue his *wicked* Will, and *inordinate* Appetite, which are but his *acquired* Nature, and consequently doth not so inseparably adhere to him, nor is so inveterate. But till his Conscience and his Reason are intirely vanquished, they will be struggling and contending; and whilst they do so, he will be continually at *Odds* and *Variance* with himself. He must Act all along with a *Self-condemning* Mind, and be content to endure the Reproaches of his Reason, and the *Clamours* of his Conscience; and while he doth so, he can never Act steadily and securely; For whilst his Reason, which is to be his *Guide*

Guide, is dissatisfied with his Way, it is impossible for him to walk on without *Difference* and *Anxiety*; at every Step he must tread with *Distrust*, and proceed with a *trembling Heart*, lest the *Ground* should sink under him; and while he thus walks with a *mistrusting Conscience*, and an *ill-averted Mind*, it is impossible but he must be *unstable in all his ways*.

5. He is at a *miserable Uncertainty* as to the present Event and Issue of his Actions. He knows, or at least he shrewdly suspects, that there is a *wise* and *all-seeing*, a *just* and *Almighty Providence* that over-rules all *Causes*, and disposes of all *Events*, and without which there is nothing can succeed how wisely soever it is designed and projected. He knows that in this *Superintending Power* and *Providence* there is an *essential Goodness* and *rectitude* of Nature, which invariably inclines it to *love* and *bless* *Goodness* and *Righteousness*, and to *hate* and *curse* their contraries in whomsoever it finds them; and being thus persuaded he cannot but conclude himself *insecure* whilst he either aims at *unjust Ends*, or uses *unjust Means* to obtain them, both the *one* and the *other* being infinitely odious to *that over-ruling Power* upon which his Success depends. For he must either imagine that the

most probable Way to oblige this Power to succeed him is to brave and ~~honor~~ it into a fawning Complaisance with his Wishes, than which there is nothing more absurd and unreasonable; or be at least infinitely jealous and suspicious that the wicked Courses he takes will, instead of obliging it to prosper them, arm its Vengeance against them, and provoke it to determine them in some dire Event. For if God hath the disposal of all Events whether good or evil, it is certainly every whit as reasonable a Project for a Man to drink deadly Poysen to obtain his Health, or to commit high Treason to escape hanging, as to endeavour to obtain any Good, or to escape any Evil by such Courses as God hates and abhors. For if the Way to obtain his Favour is to please him, and the Way to please him is to do what is pleasing to him, as most certainly it is; then it is as evident as any Proposition in the Mathematicks, that he who endeavours by such Courses as he knows are displeasing to him to obtain any Good or avoid any Evil with God's disposal, uses the most contrary Means to effect his Ends, and only spends his Pains to thwart and countermine himself. The double-minded Man therefore being conscious to himself that he hath rendered God his Enemy can never be reasonably

ably secure in his own Mind of obtaining any Good, or escaping any Evil that is in God's disposal. For tho' to serve the *wise* Ends of his Providence God many times gratifies bad Men, and gives them their *own* Hearts desire, yet for them to expect any *Good* at his hands, whilst the whole Course of their Actions is a *continued* Pro-  
vocation of him, is the most *unreasonable* Presumption in the World; 'tis to suppose him not only *insensible* of Affronts and In-  
juries, but also *fond* of them, *pleased* and *delighted* with them to *that* Degree as to  
own himself obliged to crown and reward them with his Favours; For unless it be this, there is nothing they can fancy in the  
Nature of God that can incline him to be kind to them. While therefore they are in  
Pursuit of any *Good*, or in Flight from any  
*Evil*, if any *wise* Thought arise in their  
Mind concerning the *Event*, it must be ve-  
ry *anxious* and *desponding*. There is such a  
*Good* in my View which I would fain enjoy,  
and am resolved to use my *utmost* Endeav-  
our to compass; but alas it is in the Dis-  
posal of God who is the *Sovereign Arbitra-  
tor* of my Fate, and unless he will be so  
kind as to award it to me, my *utmost* Skill  
and Conduct in the prosecution of it will  
prove insignificant; But how can I hope that  
he

he will succeed my Design, who hath so many Reasons to be my *mortal* Enemy; and if he will not, he hath ten Thousand Accidents under his Command by any *one* of which he can baffle and defeat me; and if he should gratify my Desire, I have no reason to believe that it is out of Kindness; and if it be not, instead of a *Blessing* it will prove a *Curse* to me. There is such an *Evil* hangs over me that I would fain escape, and am resolved to imply my *utmost* Care and Industry to prevent it; but when I have done all, it is in the hand of *God* whose *Vengeance* I have armed against me by a Thousand Provocations; and if he will bring it upon me (which I have too much cause to fear) he can do it by those very *Means* whereby I am endeavouring to prevent it. And if he should succeed my Endeavours, I have *just* Ground to suspect that it will be in Displeasure to me; and then it will prove but the Removal of a *less* *Evil* to make way for a *greater*. Thus if he truly reason with himself concerning the *Events* of *his own* Actions, it must create in him *infinite* Despondence and Anxiety. And whilst a Man thus lives in Fear of the *Event* it will be impossible for him to act with *any* Steadiness or Security. This therefore is the *Cafe* of the *double-minded* Man, who being

consci-

conscious to himself that all *Events* are in God's Disposal, whom he hath so many ways provoked to be his Enemy, must necessarily act with a *dubious* and *trembling* Mind, being so uncertain within himself whether that which he is doing will issue in his Benefit or Bane.

6. And lastly, He hath a most *dismal* Prospect before him of the *final* Issue and Event of all. Whenever he casts his Eyes beyond this *present* Scene of Things, wherein his Mind is tossed to and fro in such *infinite* Uncertainties; there hee sees nothing but *dismal* Horror and Tragedy, nothing but *Darkness*, *Wretchedness* and *Despair*; nothing but *Famine* to his Appetites, *Anguish* to his Mind, and *Torment* to his Conscience; nothing to accompany him but *Devils* and *damned Ghosts*, nothing to entertain him but *horrible* Thoughts and *dire* Reflections; which *woful* Prospect; if he hath got out-sinned all Sense, must necessarily alarm all his Fears, and strike his very *Soul* into an Agony. And when a Man thus feels his *present* State bad, and foresees that the *future* will be ten Thousand Times worse, he must be a *perfect* Sot or a *miserable* Wretch! Whilst he is walking through this *short* Inclosure of Time here, at every Step he feels himself prick'd and torn by *his own* Cares, and

and Fears, and Anxieties, which like Briers and Thorns grow up round about him; and when he looks over the Pale into the ~~dark~~ Field of Eternity, there he sees nothing but dire and horrid Spectacles, nothing but burning Wrath and Vengeance attending to persecute him to eternal Ages. So that whether he looks *backwards* or *formwards*, or but just before him, his Eyes can find nothing but *uncomfortable* Objects. That which is *past* is all *listless* and *insipid*; that which is *present* is mostly *nauseous* and *unpalatable*; but that which is *to come* is all *dire* and *intolerable*; and this is the sting of his Misery. Were his *past* or *present* Circumstances far worse than they are, they were *easy* to be born in the Prospect of a more *comfortable* Futurity; but when *this* is worse, ten thousand times worse than the worst of what is either *past* or *present*, for a Man to pass through all these *sad* Things together with any Patience or Content requires the Hardiness and Insensibility of a Stone. It is *sad* enough, *God* knows, to walk through the Cares, and Fears, and Disquietudes which naturally attend a *false* and *double* Mind; but to walk through all *these* within full view of Hell, and at every Step to perceive ones self approaching *nearer* and *nearer* to it, is to pass through a most *dismal* Expectation.

on to a more *dismal* Experience, which is doubtless the most *woful* Condition that *humane* Life can be exposed to. And yet this is the Condition of the *double-minded Man*; who acts his Sin with an Expectation of suffering eternally for it, and robs within sight of the Place of Execution. And when with that *Persian* Judge he is thus condemned to sit out all his Days with the *Sword of eternal Vengeance* hanging over him by a *frail Thread of Life*, which is every moment in danger of breaking; how is it possible he should enjoy *himself* in any tolerable Degree of *Peace* and *Security* of *Mind*. Doubtless if he hath any sense of danger, the *Foresight* of so great a one as this of being *miserable* for ever, must necessarily create in him a *proportionable* *Fear* and *Anxiety*, and consequently render him very *unstable* in all his *Ways*.

What then remains but that seeing the State of *Hypocrites* and *double-minded Men* is so wretched, and *miserable*, and *insecure*, we all of us from henceforth resolve, as we render our own Ease and Quiet, to lay aside all *Hypocrisy* and *Double-dealing*, and act through the remaining Part of our Lives with *Plainness*, *Integrity*, and *Simplicity* of *Mind*. Of which way of living if you would once be persuaded to make a through

Experiment, I dare engage you would find it abundantly more *secure*, and *easy*, and *comfortable* than that which you have hitherto pursued. And to convince you of the Truth of this, I will crave leave in a few Words to represent to you the *Reverse* of the *double-minded* Man's Life, and to shew you the *opposite* Advantages of living honestly and uprightly.

1. He who lives uprightly goes upon *firm*, and *stanch* Principles, such as these, that there is a God that governs the World, that inspects all the Thoughts and Actions of Men, and will reward or punish them with *eternal* Happiness or Misery; which being founded upon as *full* Evidence as the Nature of the Thing will bear, and attested by the *inmost* sense of *humane* Nature, by the *Consent* of *wise* Men of all Ages, Nations, and Religions, and in short by the *unanimous* Vote of Mankind, are such as will endure the Test of our *surest* Reason, and give *ample* Satisfaction of their Truth to the most *inquisitive* Minds. The *upright* Man therefore proceeding upon such Principles as these treads upon *firm* ground, which he is secure will never sink under him, and which is more, if it should will in the End leave him in *as good* Condition as those who proceed upon the *contrary* Princi-

Principles. For whereas if their Principle<sup>s</sup> prove false, their acting upon them will prove their *eternal* Ruin, if his should prove so, he will live more at Ease for them, more suitably to his Nature, and more satisfied with himself; and when he dies, he will only be left in the *same* Condition with *them*, in a State of *eternal* Sleep and Insensibility. So that if his Principles should prove *false*, he can never be the worse for acting upon them; but if they should prove *true*, he will be infinitely the better. And 'tis a vast security to the Mind to proceed upon such Principles as, if they prove *false*, will leave us *safe* and at *rest*, and if they prove *true* will leave us *eternal*ly happy.

2. The *upright* Man walks in a *plain*, *easy*, and *direct* Way. Those *eternal* Tracts of Righteousness and Goodness wherein he walks are so plainly *characterized* upon his Heart and Conscience by the Finger of God, and described and inculcated in the *divine* Oracles with so *bright* a Sun-beam, that if he honestly enquire he cannot miss them, and when he hath found them he cannot easily swerve from them. For whereas Wick-  
edness is a *boundless* Wilderness whose Paths do all *thwart* and cross one *another*, all Vices

confisting in Extremes which are *direct Contraries*, and being either the Defects or Excesses of some Virtue ; so that there are not only *two* Vices to every *one* Virtue, but both are Extremes running counter to one another : the Paths of Virtue lie straight forward between these *vicious* Extremes, and like *parallel Lines* never interfere. So that here a Man may walk on safely without any *great* Reach of Wit, or *laborious* Diligence of Enquiry, and needs do no more than follow *Solomons* Direction ; *Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left, Prov. 4. 24, 27.* Here, according to the Prophet, is *an high-way, called the way of holiness ; the way-faring men, tho' fools, shall not err therein, Isaiah 35. 8.* And having so *plain* and *direct* a way before him he needs neither tire himself in the search of it, nor rack his Brains with any *anxious* Deliberations in the Choice of it, nor grate his Mind with Scruples and *galling* Regrets in the Pursuit of it ; but may always find it with Ease, and follow it with Security.

3. The *upright* Man acts *openly* and without fear of Discovery ; for being conscious to himself both that his Intentions are *clear*, and his Prosecutions of them *fair* and *honest*,

*honest*, he could be well enough content that he had a *Window* into his Breast that all the World might see through him. He knows that his Thoughts and Actions are such as will endure sounding, and bear listening to the Bottom ; and therefore takes no care to disguise himself in *false Shews* and Appearances. For he who can reflect upon *himself* with Satisfaction and Complacency may look all the World in the face with Confidence and Assurance; as knowing that the more *curiously* he is watch'd, and the more exactly he is scanned, the more highly he shall be approved by all that are *wise* and *good*. And tho' his Reputation may for a while be clouded by *Malice* or *Mistake*, yet he is fully satisfied that *one* time or *other* the very Light of Things will scatter these *Mists*, and clear these *Misprisions*, and that then he shall shine the *brighter* for being *over-cast*. And being thus satisfied he walks openly through the World with a *bare Face*, and in the light of the Sun, having no Occasion to Skulk into *Coverts* and *Retirements*.

4. The *upright* Man lives in Peace with himself, and in an *amicable* Accord with his own Reason and Conscience. For he who follows his Reason, and makes his Conscience his Guide (as every *upright* Man doth)

I i can

can neither be reproached by the *one*, nor condemned by the *other*; And having to all his Aims and Actions the *full* Approbation of his Reason and Conscience in reiterated Ecchos resounding after him, he hath always good Weather within and a *clear* Sky about him, wherein his Mind breaths none but *calm* and *wholsome* Thoughts, and hath a *hopeful* Confidence, and a *cheerful* Satisfaction in every Thing he doth, as being *agreeable* to his *own* Reason, *conformable* to his Duty, and *worthy* of himself. And being thus crowned with the Applauses of his *own* Conscience, he goes on through all the *Difficulties* of Life with Alacrity and Courage, having nothing from within to countermand or controul him, no *Sting* of *Remorse* for what he hath done, nor *Check* or *Struggling* against what he is doing; nothing to pull him back from his way, or to cause him to halt in it, or any way to distract and distract him in his Motion. And when at any time he is balk'd and defeated in any of his *honest* Designs and Prosecutions, he goes on with an *exact* Mind under the Disappointment, triumphing in the Integrity of his Heart and the Innocence of his Procedure, having a Paradise *within* him where he lives at Ease, and enjoys himself in Serenity and Peace, let Things be never so *stormy* and *tempestuous* without.

5. The *upright* Man is secure of the *good* Issues and Events of his *honest* Aims and Prosecutions. Not that he is confident that Things shall always succeed according to his *present* Aims and Desires ; but this he is sure of, that they shall always succeed as God would have them, who is *wiser* than he, and loves him better than he loves himself. He is satisfied with *this*, that God will never cross him but for very *good* Reasons ; such Reasons, as if he himself did fully comprehend, would make him heartily wish that God in his *tender* Mercy would cross and disappoint him ; and living under this Persuasion, he is secure in *his own* Mind that he shall either have what he desires, or something better in Exchange. He builds upon this, that if what he is projecting be *good* for him, it shall certainly succeed according to his Wishes ; but that whether it be *good* for him or no, God knows better than he, and therefore if it doth not succeed, it is well for him that it doth not ; because God certainly knew that it was not *good* for him that it should : And to be disappointed of those Hopes which he fancies are *good* for him, is a Thousand Times more for his Interest than to be gratified, which God knows will be *hurtful* to him ; because he is certain, both that he may be

mistaken, and that God cannot. Wherefore let the worst that *can* arrive, (or that which through his Blindness and Folly he *esteems* the worst;) this he depends upon, that matters being rightly stated, he shall in the Issue of Things come *off* very well, so as to be a Gainer in the foot of the Account; and being thus persuaded, his Mind is not harrassed like other Mens, with *anxious* Thoughts concerning the Event, but let what will happen, he goes on with a *calm* and *satisfied* Mind, and embraces his Fortune with Satisfaction and Complacency.

6. And lastly, He hath a *fair* and *glorious* Prospect before him of the Issue and Events of all. The Sense of *his own* Integrity and Uprightness hath raised him to a *glorious* Hope, whereon he stands, like *Moses* on the Top of *Pisgah*, surveying the *heavenly Canaan*, whose *fruitful* Soil abounds with every *Good*, and flows with everlasting Pleasure: From whence with *joyful* Eyes he sees the *happy* Period of his *tedious* March through this *barren* Wilderness of Life: He sees the *blissful* Mansions and Abodes, that the *God* of Love hath prepared to receive him; He sees them most richly furnished with all the Delights that his *vast hungry* Desires can crave or swallow to *eternal* Ages. He sees that there is nothing but a short *momentary* Death,

Death, that like the River *Jordan*, separates this Wilderness from that *heavenly Land*, and that as soon as ever he hath past and forded this, his Travel will conclude in *endless Rest* and *Pleasure*, in the Accomplishment of all his Hopes, and the *full Satisfaction* of all his Wishes. With the Prospective of his *Faith* and *Hope* he beholds the *illustrious Orders* of *Angels*, the *glorious Company* of *Apostles*, the *goodly Fellowship* of *Prophets*, the *noble Army* of *Martyrs*, with *Crowns of Glory* and *Blessedness* on their Heads, beckoning to him from the *farther Shore*, to make *haste thither*, and come into the *joyous Participation* of their Society and Happiness. The sight of all which *glorious Things*, inspires his Heart with such an Addition of new Life and Vigor, as carries him on with *Chearfulness* and *Alacrity* through all the *weary Stages* of his Life; for he who walks with *Heaven* in his Eye, is a Thousand Times happier in his Expectation, than if he had all the Goods this World affords in his Possession. The *upright Man* therefore having this *blessed Expectation* before him, he goes on with a *bold* and *secure Mind*, and in his Course is *stedfast* and *immoveable*, *always abounding in the Word of the Lord*; for as much as he knows that his Labour shall not be *in vain in the Lord*. Seeing therefore the *vast*

vast Advantages *Integrity* and *Uprightness* hath of *Double-dealing*, as we tender our own Ease and Security, let us all study for the Future, to lead the Remainder of our Lives in *exact* Sincerity, and Simplicity of Heart; which will not only extricate us from the *greatest* Difficulties and Perplexities of this *present* Life, but also crown us with *immortal* Ease and Happiness in the Life to come: Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, to whom be Honour, and Glory, and Praise, from this time forth and for ever. Amen.

---

F I N I S.

---

Books Printed for Walt. Kettleby at the  
Bishop's-head in St. Pauls Church-yard.

**D**R. Scot's Christian Life ; 4 Vol. 8°  
Mysteries in Religion vindicated, or the  
Filiation, Deity, and Satisfaction of our Saviour  
asserted against Socinians and others, with occa-  
sional Reflections on several late Pamphlets ; by  
Luke Milburn Presbyter of the Church of Engl.

Allen's Works ; 4 Vol. 8°  
Of Trust in God, or a Discourse concerning  
casting our Care upon God in all Difficulties ;  
together with an Exhortation to patient suffer-  
ing for Righteousness ; in a Sermon on 1 Pet. 3.  
24, 15. by Nath. Spinks M. A. a Presbyter of the  
Church of England.

Fifteen Sermons Preach'd on several Occa-  
sions.

A Sermon Preach'd before the Lords, Spirit-  
ual and Temporal, in Parliament Assembled,  
in the Abby Church at Westminster, January  
30th. 1699.

A Sermon about the Government of the  
Thoughts.

A Sermon Preach'd before the King at St.  
James's March 13th. 1697. These Four by the  
Reverend Father in God, John, Lord Arch-  
bishop of York.

A Sermon Preach'd before the Honourable  
House of Commons at St. Margaret's Westminster,  
Jan. 30th. 1698.

A Sermon Preach'd at the Cathedral Church  
of St. Paul's, Jan. 1st. 1699. Being the First for  
the Year 1700. Both these by Offspring Blackall.

The Faith and Practice of a Church of Eng-  
land Man, The Fifth Edition.

Books

Books Printed for Sam. Mansfield at the Ship  
in Cornhill near the Royal Exchange.

**C**ollection of Miscellanies, Poems, and Essays,  
Practical Discourses upon the Beatitudes :

To which is added, Reflections upon a late Essay concerning Human Understanding Vol. 1. 3d Edition.

Practical Discourses upon several Divine Subjects 2d Edition in 3 Vol.

Letters Philosophical, Moral, and Divine ; to the Reverend Mr. John Norris, with his Answer.

Treatises on several Subjects formerly printed singly, now collected into One Vol. viz. Reflections upon the Conduct of Human Life. The Charge of Schism continu'd. Two Treatises concerning Divine Light. Spiritual Counsel, or the Father's Advice to his Children, in 8° Price 5s. These written by the Reverend Mr. John Norris Rector of Beaminster near Sarum, 3d Edition A

A Treatise of Sacramental Covenanting with Christ, with a Preface chiefly design'd for the satisfaction of Dissenters ; the 4th Edit. in 8° Price 2s.

An Explication of the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer, with the Addition of some Forms of Prayer. Price 1s. 6d.

A Dialogue betwixt Two Protestants (in Answer to a Popish Catechism, called, A short Catechism against the Sectaries) Price 2s.

Poetick Miscellanies. Price 1s. 6d.

The Christian Monitor, containing an earnest Exhortation to an Holy Life Price 3d. having already sold 100000. those that are Charitably disposed may have them for 20s. the Hundred.

These Five written by the Reverend Mr. John Rawlet Author of the Christian Monitor.

